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DECISION;

OR,

RELIGION MUST BE ALL,

OR IS NOTHING.

"Search the Scriptures."—*John*, v. 39.
"Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace."
Job, xxii. 2.

SIXTH AMERICAN EDITION.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM BURGESS, JUN.
97 Fulton-street.

1828.

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INTRODUCTORY SKETCH.

STRICT religion is now so much more common in well educated circles than it unhappily was some years ago, that there are very few young people in those circles, who have not in some way had it brought into their notice. Every young person almost knows that there are people, many of whom are highly distinguished for superiority of talent, and great cultivation of mind, who consider the superficial, inefficacious, cold Profession of religion which is generally thought sufficient by the world, as altogether different from true religion. Some young people there are, who not only know this, but who have had real religion so forcibly presented to them, as to arrest their attention, and create alarm in their consciencies, yet who have ventured to stifle this voice of the Spirit of God, though they felt that the impression it made was unlike any other, and powerful beyond any other. There are other young people, who, though at first they revolt at the idea, that they whom they love and esteem are not only themselves ignorant of true religion, but have educated them also in ignorance of it, who are yet too honest and candid to resist truth when it is placed before them, who cannot rest satisfied till they have examined whether all is indeed right, both with themselves and with those they love. It is a person of this

last character, whom I wish to introduce to my young readers; and by placing before them a few scenes and conversations drawn from the early part of her religious life, to show the influence that true religion, learnt chiefly and simply from the Bible, and proved to be so by its genuine fruits, may have on those who love us, and with whom we associate.

This young person whom I shall introduce under the name of Gertrude Aberly, is the youngest daughter of a lady, who, while still very young, was, by the death of her husband, left a widow, with the charge of three children, a son and two daughters. Colonel Aberley died in Egypt, of a wound received on the day the brave Abercrombie fell.

Mrs. Aberley was for some time almost overwhelmed by this blow; and it was long before the mistaken kindness of friends could induce her to return to society and the world. At last, her sincere belief of what her friends constantly urged, that it was absolutely necessary for the advantage of her children, that she should again cultivate a large circle of acquaintances, induced poor Mrs. Aberley once more to involve herself in society, cares and bustle of the world; for to her it no longer afforded any pleasures. Mrs. Aberley's children were educated amongst thos , and like those, of her own rank. When they grew up, her daughters were, by their common acquaintances, thought amiable and accomplished; her son, though considered a fine young man, was regarded as yet more than even the world considers allowably impetuous and ungovernable. The truth regarding these young people was

that Edward, though as a boy, he had been all his mother could wish, on attaining manhood, had entered with an eagerness that made him spurn all restraint, upon the follies and vices of young men of his age and fortune, and cost his mother many a secret tear.—Anna, Mrs. Aberley's eldest daughter, was of a thoughtless and lively character, with strong feelings, and warm affections; but rash in judging, and in forming her opinions, and equally disposed to be unguarded in their expression, and vehement in their defence. Gertrude, Mrs. Aberley's youngest daughter, was of a very different character from her sister. Naturally modest, thoughtful, and reflecting, with good sense, and generous and gentle disposition, she possessed the esteem and affection of each member of her own family, and in general, of those with whom they were on terms of intimacy.

When Anna was eighteen, and Gertrude seventeen, they were, as it is termed, introduced, and entered on all the gaieties of a London winter.

It was during the first winter of thoughtless folly, that Gertrude was called to observe that kind of religion which produces an entire change on the heart and life. The subject of this change was her own cousin, a young man of fine talents, and very agreeable manners, but whose habit had become so irregular and extravagant, as to make him a source of anxiety and apprehension to all his friends. This young man became truly religious, and then devoted all his hitherto misapplied powers to promote the knowledge of that energetic principle, which, as a living fire, had

subdued whatever opposed it in his own soul. Gertrude at first listened to her cousin's religious opinions with indifference, regarding them only as a new proof of his unsteadiness and eccentricity. His friends laughed, and called him Methodist; and she joined in ridiculing his newly acquired preciseness in language and manner. Mrs. Aberley also listened with perfect indifference to her nephew's opinions, though she rejoiced that one so nearly connected with, and intimate in her family, should have adopted any notions, however absurd, which led to conduct so irreproachable as that now exhibited by young Ashton. Edward at first also joined in ridiculing his cousin, but soon felt that the strong truths urged by the powerful talents of Ashton were not easily answered or repelled. He lost his temper in arguing; and when his cousin, contrary to his former arrogance of manner, and contemptuous haughtiness of temper, replied to his warmth with the utmost mildness and gentleness, Edward, to avoid the uneasiness produced by such conversations, learnt carefully to avoid Ashton's society. Anna, too, attempted to argue with her cousin, and treated his new opinions with contempt and derision. He, however, soon forced her to quit the field of argument; and in reply to her ridicule, painted her own trifling pursuits, contrasted with the demands of the divine law, in colours so strong, as at times to fix a feeling of alarm in her conscience, which it required all her efforts and recollections of his own former conduct, to enable her to get rid of. Anna was, however, immersed in gaieties, and hated whatever seemed to condemn them; and she too learnt, like her

brother, to forget her cousin's painful appeals to her conscience by carefully avoiding to listen to them.—Those appeals, however, were not lost. Gertrude at length began to listen and attend to their meaning; and her candid mind could not resist their force, when joined to the extraordinary and continued change in Ashton's whole conduct. He gradually gained her attention; and she felt a wish to hear that kind of preaching to which he ascribed a change so unaccountable.—With her mother's consent, she accompanied her aunt, Mrs. Ashton, to hear her cousin's favourite preacher. She heard, and her mind soon fully acquiesced in the truths delivered by a servant of God, whose life was holy, whose reasoning was conclusive, and whose manner bespoke the deep feeling he himself had of those truths he taught. Gertrude began to study the Scriptures, and felt that she never before had understood them. The life of gaiety in which she was involved, became irksome to her; but she did not immediately perceive that it was her duty to forsake it.

The following summer and autumn, Mrs. Aberley and her daughters, spent in the country. There Gertrude devoted every moment she could command, to the study of the Bible, and such had been its influence that before she left her rural retirement, she too was decided to be a Methodist like her cousin Ashton. On the return of her family to town, in winter, Gertrude, gently, but firmly, refused to enter into the gaieties of the world.—But I shall leave her reasons to be stated by herself.

THE DECISION.

PART I.

PERSONS INTRODUCED.

MRS. ABERLEY.
ANNA, *her eldest daughter.*
GERTRUDE, *her youngest daughter.*
EDWARD, *her son.*

Mrs. Aberley's house, London.

A small apartment in Mrs. Aberley's house.

GERTRUDE, *alone.*

Seated near a table, and deeply occupied in reading. A gentle tap is heard at the chamber-door.

GER. *(Starting and turning towards the door.)* So, my promised hour of enjoyment is cut short. *(Rises and opens the door, at which stands* ANNA, *a splendid dress in one arm, and a work-box in the other.)*

GER. Anna! What is all this? I hope you are not come to consult me about your dress. You know I have lost all interest in such things.

ANNA. Oh! Gertrude, have pity on me! Just look at this dress! Mrs. Dalton sent it to me so loaded with trimming, that I set Morley to alter it, and only see

what a thing she has made of it! I do not know what to do, for this dress I must wear to-night. I have a most particular reason for doing so, and yet I have little more than one hour left to try to improve it—and to dress. As for Morley, she is now so cross and displeased, that should I leave it to her, she would only make it worse. Do look at this trimming; did you ever see any thing so heavy and ugly? Besides, it hangs so low I shall certainly tread it down if I dare venture to dance. (*Throws herself into a chair.*)—What on earth shall I do? You laugh, Gertrude. Well that is really ill-natured; and if your new religion has taught *you* to be so, it has indeed changed you.

Ger. (*Attempting to suppress a laugh.*) No, Anna, my new religion has not taught me to be ill-natured; but it *has* taught me the absurdity of being made wretched, as you at this moment are, by such a trifle. I beg pardon, however, for laughing. And now, in reparation, what can I do for you?

Anna. (*Rising with animation.*) Oh, if you undertake the matter, all may be well yet. Tell me only how to alter this. Ah, there it is into your hands, and soon all will be grace and beauty. Dear Gertrude, this is very kind. But what were you reading? I have interrupted you. (*Opens Gertrude's book—reads.*) "Spiritual mind—Self-denial."—(*Turns over the leaves.*)—What close small print! It seems a very long book. Is it all on one subject, Gertrude?

Ger. It is, Anna: all on a subject which makes me doubt whether I am right in even assisting you in preparing to spend an evening, or rather night, in a manner so trifling.

ANNA. Ah! then we shall think no more of this gloomy book. (*Closes and puts it away.*) Now, dear Gertrude, do not fall into a brown study over my poor dress.

GER. Well—for this once—what do you wish me to do?

ANNA. Nay, you must decide. I have in vain puzzled over it.

GER. And what within has made you determine so positively to wear no other dress but this?

ANNA. Now, Gertrude, what a question! You know I must have some very strong reason; and how you trifle away the few moments left me. I am sure Mamma is nearly ready.

GER. (*Smiling.*) Some strong reason! but come then, we must be busy. See, I think this will do. (*Arranging the trimming.*)

ANNA. Oh, delightfully. Dear Gertrude, how perfect is your taste! And yet to give up every thing to sit moping here!

GER. Not moping, Anna. I never knew happiness till now, because I never before knew the source of happiness.

ANNA. How gracefully you are arranging that, Gertrude. What return can I make you for leaving your dear old book, and your new-found happiness, to assist me in doing what appears to you so foolish?

GER. Will you promise to make one return, my dear Anna, which it is in your power to do this very night?

ANNA. Most assuredly, provided it is not to stay at home.

GER. No: But it is to try during the whole evening, to remember that God is present where you are; and that your inmost heart, as well as outward manner, and words, and looks, are marked by him.

ANNA. Now that is so like cousin Ashton! and do you know, Gertrude, I think you have asked me to do what would be almost profane. The Bible itself says there is a time for every thing.

GER. Does the Bible say there is a time, Anna, in which we may place ourselvss in circumstances where the very recollection of God would be irreverent? Can such circumstances be innocent?

ANNA. Now, Gertrude, are you going to say that a ball is not an innocent amusement?

GER. It is not I who have said so, Anna; but I think you have.

ANNA. You always say something gloomy to me just before I go out. I do not think this is kind, Gertrude.

GER. I mean kindness only, Anna.

ANNA. I believe you; but you damp my spirits.

GER. Where do you wish to spend eternity, Anna?

ANNA. Now what a question! and how solemnly you pronounced that word, "Eternity." You are really *very* gloomy, Gertrude.

GER. Why should the idea of eternity be gloomy? But answer me, Anna, where do you wish to spend it?

ANNA. In heaven, to be sure.

GER. And with God? Do you not suppose he is for ever present there?

ANNA. To be sure I do.

GER. And do you suppose there will be times when

you will be permitted to be free from restraint, and happy, and get out of his presence to amuse youself for a little?

ANNA. I understand you Gertrude—but hush—I hear Mamma's voice inquiring for me(*listening.*) It is indeed. Gertrude you have ruined my enjoyment for this night by that request of yours, and those strange gloomy questions. But here comes Mamma.

Enter MRS. ABERLEY.

MRS. ABER. Anna why are you here and not dressed? And Gertrude working at a ball dress? Are you going with us Gertrude? (*Smiling.*)

ANNA. Gertrude has had the charity to arrange this trimming for me, Mamma. Mrs. Dalton and Morley had made it unwearable betwixt them.

MRS. ABER. And where is the difference between going to a ball oneself, and preparing for another's going?

GER. There is some difference, Mamma; yet I am not sure that I am quite right in assisting Anna.

MRS. ABER. My love can you be wrong in making others happy? If you experienced your mother's feelings, when she, night after night, in submission to the—what shall I call it? of a daughter, leaves her, with all her advantages, to bury herself and be forgotten at the very age when her mother hoped to be rewarded for all her cares, you might hesitate in deciding that your conduct was right.

GER. (*Her eyes filling with tears.*) I know I give pain, Mamma. I wish you felt as vividly as I do, the reasons which forced me to do so.

Mrs. Aber. Well, Gertrude, no more of this. Is the dress ready?

Ger. I have arranged it so that Morley cannot possibly go wrong in finishing it.

Mrs. Aber Well then, Anna, get Jane to do your hair, while Morley finishes your dress; and make haste my dear, for it is very late. I shall stay with Gertrude till you get ready to go. [Exit Anna.

Mrs. Aberley, Gertrude.

Mrs. Aber. How sombre your little apartment is, Gertrude. I feel as if I was visiting a daughter who had taken the veil.

Ger. (*Drawing her chair close to her mother's and taking her hand affectionately.*) Well, Mamma, I have in one sense really taken the veil. I suppose the Roman Catholics mean by that expression that the world is forever veiled from the thoughts and affections of those who take the vows of seclusion. With me the belief of the awful things of an unseen world has really done what that external shadow of real religion pretends to do. No vows could add to the force of this reality. Oh Mamma! if you only saw those things as I see them, you would be as much astonished at the insensibility of others, as I now feel at yours, and at my own hitherto.

Mrs. Aber. Gertrude, you are a perfect enthusiast. You are under the influence of imagination, not of reason. You sit alone here, your imagination busily conjuring up phantoms of its own creation, which you

the Being I worship, and love, and trust, a real Being? Is it not on his own plain simple words that I rely? What is meant by that which is termed "Faith," in Scripture, Mamma, and which is there so constantly mentioned as necessary to salvation? Is that enthusiasm?

MRS. ABER. No, Gertrude. But you are too vehement. I am not to be interrupted and schooled by you.

GER. (*Pressing her mother's hand to her forehead.*) Dear Mamma, forgive me.

MRS. ABER. Truth, my dear, is calm. It requires not the aid of passionate expressions.

GER. (*Modestly.*) If the heart is full of warm affections, Mamma, may it not express itself warmly and yet truly? Were I to speak coldly on this subject, I should be an hypocrite.

MRS. ABER. Perhaps so, Gertrude; but your warmth certainly proves you to be an enthusiast. But here comes Anna.

Enter ANNA.

GER. (*Retaining her mother's hand, smil*
warmth then enthusiasm, Mamma?

MRS. ABER. (*Withdrawing her hand wi*
ure.) Schooling me again, Gertrude! (*T*
her.)

GER. Mamma, do not leave me in displea

MRS. ABER. Well, Anna, (*looking at her.*)
prettily dressed, indeed!

ANNA. Look, Gertrude, how pretty and gra
trimming is now.

GER. Very pretty. (*Looks all over Anna's dress, and then sighs.*)

ANNA. Now, dear Gertrude, why that sigh? Why should you force yourself to give up what you sigh after, and what surely must be innocent?

GER. You mistake the cause of my sighing, Anna. But good night; you see Mamma is impatient to be gone.

MRS. ABER. And pray, Gertrude, what *was* the cause of that deep and heavy sigh with which you finished the inspection of poor Anna's dress?

GER. I was not conscious of sighing, Mamma, I did so involuntarily.

MRS. ABER. But you now seem conscious of the cause, so pray let us have it.

GER. Mamma, I only displease you. Pray do not ask me.

MRS. ABER. Now, child, don't be mysterious and important about nothing.

GER. Well, Mamma, since you insist upon it, the th is, that when I looked at Anna, so gaily dressed, at her animated, happy countenance, and those in her hair, the thought, "Poor lamb, decked crifice," came so strongly into my mind, it heavy sigh.

ER. Strange, gloomy girl! You turn every ness. Come Anna, it cheers me to look at

ood night, dear Mamma. (*Offers to take her* h *Mrs. Aberley draws back, and passing her,* room with *Anna, and closes the door.*)

Gertrude, seating herself at the table, leans her face on her hands, and bursts into tears. The door again gently opens, and Mrs. Aberley looks anxiously at Gertrude, then enters

Mrs. Aber. Gertrude, my love, good night, (*Bends over and kisses her cheek.*)

Ger. My dearest Mamma! (*Clasps her arms round her mother.*) Oh, Mamma, if I could only make you feel what sufferihg it is to me to give you pain!

Mrs. Aber. I do not know how it is, Gertrude, but there is something strangely overpowering in your enthusiasm. You will infect me. But good night, my love. Do not sit up late. God bless you. (*Embraces her and exit.*)

Gertrude, (*alone.*)

Ger. Oh my own dear mother! I trust you will indeed be infected. (*Covers her face with her hands, and prays. After a short time some one enters the room softly; she starts and turns round.*)

Enter Edward.

Ger. Edward! What is the matter? To what wonderful event am I indebted for a visit from you at this hour.

Edw. You speak gaily, Gertrude, but you have been in tears. What has vexed you?

Ger. Oh, nothing of any consequence.

Edw. Is it really so, now, Gertrude?

Ger. Really. Upon my word, I would rather that what has happened to make me shed tears had happened than not. Now, answer my question: What has brought you here? I think you seem unusually grave

Edw. I want to have a conversation with you, Gertrude, and have been watching till my mother and Anna should depart to their midnight revels. Now just guess where I have been this evening.

Ger. I guess! Impossible; but I shall try. You have been loseing money at play, and are now in low spirits.

Edw. No, Gertrude, you are quite wrong.

Ger. You look so grave and quiet, that perhaps you have been at your Guardian's receiving a lecture.

Edw. I have been receiving a lecture, but not from my Guardian.

Ger. And from whom else did you condescend to listen to a lecture?

Edw From Mr. Percy, your beloved Reverend Mr. Percy, who has lectured me till I am convinced I am the greatest fool on earth.

Ger. Mr. Percy! What do you mean, my dearest Edward? Has Mr. Percy really had the goodness to ——; but it is impossible. You never could meet——. Do, dear Edward, tell me what you mean.

Edw. Well then, let us draw near the fire, for I have much to say to you, Gertrude.

Ger. Begin, dear Edward.

Edw Well then, Gertrude, however careless and foolish, or worse, you may have thought me, I have not been insensible to the change that has taken place in you during the last year. You know how Ashton annoyed me last winter, by constantly attempting to draw me into religious conversation. You will recollect that though his arguments had no effect upon me, I

could not answer them. The truth was, my own conscience told me that what he said was true; but I knew that his conduct had been more criminal than mine had ever been, and I thought it natural enough that he should feel uneasy, and wish to reform; but I confess I despised him for being driven, as I thought, by fear, to make himself ridiculous. When you, Gertrude, began to agree with him, and to join in what he said respecting the natural alienation of the heart from God and true religion, I for a time could scarcely believe you sincere. Your life appeared to me perfectly innocent, and I thought had mine been as much so, I should have felt nothing but peace. At that time I carefully avoided Ashton; but, though you perhaps did not perceive it, I listened with much interest while you argued with my mother about your new opinions, and often was very much surprised with what you said respecting sin and conscience. I well knew the meaning of what you said, but wondered what you could have done, that led you to speak so truly and feelingly of the dreadful gloom of a guilty conscience. I had often experienced that dread of God, which you described as that which makes a sinner feel his need of a mediator between him and that awful Being, the very thought of whom, when we are conscious of having disobeyed Him, can so appal us. In listening to you, however, Gertrude, I soon perceived that it was indistinct ideas of right and wrong which had led me to consider your life so innocent; and I fully agreed with you when you tried to prove that it was not innocent to live in the neglect of those plain commandments recorded in that book, which, at the

same time, we professed to believe was a revelation from heaven. I had no inclination, however, to take that book for my guide. I supposed if I did so, that I must begin by giving up almost every thing from which I derived any pleasure. I attempted, therefore, to stifle my convictions of what was truth, and to banish every good thought which arose in my mind, by folly, and what you would call sin. I have, however, at times been so very wretched, that, though you will perhaps scarcely believe me when I tell you so, I have resolved to reform, and have even attempted to give up some of those things, in the indulgence of which, I felt myself most criminal.

GER. I do believe you, my dear Edward. I believe implicitly whatever you tell me.

EDW. But it was only two days ago, Gertrude, that you so kindly and gently warned me against indulging the increasing violence of my temper; so how can you believe in my attempts at improvement?

GER. And it was only two days ago, that you, Edward, surprised me by your candid avowal that your temper was a source of misery to yourself, and that you had no power to do what, in your soul, you thought right and wished to do.

EDW. Did I say so to you, Gertrude?

GER. You did not exactly say so to *me*, but you were walking about the room, and did say so with much vehemence and feeling.

EDW. Well, I have at times, of late, been so very miserable, that I may have unconsciously exposed my feelings when I should have been more anxious not to

do so. I may tell you, Gertrude, that I have for some time dreaded my hours of solitude and reflection, while I despised myself for the weakness and cowardice which prevented my abandoning what, in those hours, appeared to me utterly unworthy of pursuit. I have loathed, at such times of reflection, those very scenes into which I could not perhaps resist entering the next day. I have been disgusted with the worthlessness of those very associates, who still have so much power over me, that I must fly from them if I am to escape from their vices. But I must go on with my story. I think Mr. Percy has shown me in what I erred. I supposed I must myself do that which he says God alone can do. I have thought of praying to God, but supposed hitherto, that before I presumed to approach Him, I must give up all that he disapproved of. I have thought also of going to church with you, but though I saw that many of my mad dissipated companions accompanied the females of their family to church, and indeed seemed to think that in so doing they had in some way atoned for their irregularities during the week, I always felt that it would be absolute hypocrisy in me to kneel in the presence of God on Sunday, as if I was a worshipper of His, while I was conscious of violating his law during the week. But to shorten my story, when I was in a shop this forenoon, I saw an advertisement, purporting that Mr. Percy was to preach a sermon this evening in behalf of some charitable institution. I immediately felt an inclination to hear this person, whose preaching had produced such a marvellous effect on your mind, and at a time when I was sure no one who knew me

would be there. I therefore disengaged myself from a party with whom I had promised to dine, and when the time came wrapped myself up in a great coat and went to the church. It was about half full when I arrived, and I seated myself in a pew where I could have an excellent view of the preacher. I confess, Gertrude, for I must tell you both my bad and good feelings, part of my intention in going was to surprise you with my knowledge of the manner and style of your favourite. When I was seated in my pew, observing the people as they crowded in, I must farther confess that the scene appeared to me very unattractive, and our friend Charles Ormond's lines, which he says are prose verse, came into my thoughts most forcibly. They describe the filling of a church of that kind to the life; and his own feelings were exactly what I experienced, when I saw the unlovely assemblage of poor mechanics, and fine pious ladies and fat citizens, all showering in, just led together.

"My young eyes, proud and careless, gazed abroad,
O'er those who crowded there, nor loved the scene;
I cared not though their hearts were God's abode,
But scanning their poor aspects low and mean,
I shunned their crowding near, as holier I had been.

"And still they crowded in; some and slow,
As they had thought on him they worshipped there;
And some all haste, with eager anxious brow,
Bustling with selfish speed, to seize a share
Of most commodious pew, with little care
How others sped—their kindling looks and while
Betraying their poor hearts, if unaware,
Some earlier worshipper their speed beguile,
And sit where they would sit, with pleased unconscious smile.

GER. That picture is drawn by an enemy. Oh that I had been with you, Edward! I should have sat joyfully by the lowest and the meanest. But do go on.

EDW. Well the people crowded in till there was no more room in the pews, and numbers stood in the passages. I began to think of coming out, it was so trifling; and an old labourer, who had drawn on his Sunday coat over all his week day filth, placed himself to stand and lean against the pew where I sat, with a coarse dirty hand, holding a greasy old hat just under my nose

GER. Oh Edward! Did you not think how much the poor old man must have loved the house of God, when, after a day of labour, he was contented to stand two hours that he might be present there?

EDW. Not till I had made a movement which made the old man look round. I suppose he saw disgust in my looks, for he immediately removed to a little distance, and putting his hat on the ground, stood without any support; no expression of displeasure passing over his mild but manly countenance. My heart smote me; but Mr. Percy at that moment appeared, and both my old man and I were instantly occupied. I confess, Gertrude, Mr. Percy's looks and manner are extremely prepossessing. He read prayers, during which my mind became unusually calm and happy, though I cannot say I was attending to them; but softening thoughts, which have been strangers to my bosom of late, again visited me; and I believe they were excited in a great degree by the devout and happy looks of my poor despised old man, whose face was now a little turned to

me, and expressed much feeling, and even elevation, weile he joined in the service.—"How much fairer and purer his soul is than mine," thought I. "Were we both at this moment disembodied, and in the presence of our Judge, which of us should feel that he ought to shrink back, and give place to the other?" It was not difficult to decide that it would be the proud sinner, who had a few minutes before so unfeelingly insulted the poor saint. When prayers were over, I with great difficulty persuaded the old man to take my place and I took his.

GER. Dear Edward! and were you allowed to stand?

EDW. Oh, Indeed I was. There was no room any where; but I felt very happy; and after Mr. Percy began, I had not a thought for any thing but his discourse.

GER. What was his subject?—his text?

EDW. It was this:—"Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." I do not recollect what part of the Bible he took it from.

GER. From St John. Most gracious words! But proceed.

EDW. He began in a manner so calm, and dignified, and solemn, to describe those who would not come to the Saviour of the world that they might have life, that my attention was entirely fixed; and each description of character suited exactly some people who immediately came into my thoughts. He described our guardian, Mr. Lornton, to the very life—his regularity—his abhorrence and dread of whatever is disreputable—his rectitude in all worldly matters—and yet his utter forgetfulness of God. His nicety in fulfilling every duty

to his fellow-men, and his absolute contempt of his duty to God. No appearance of love to God—neglect of his instituted worship—profanation of his Sabbath by travelling—or seeing company—or doing whatever he chooses, in contempt of that express command, which says, Thou shalt do no manner of work on the Sabbath day, thou, nor thy servants, nor thy cattle. Oh, Gertrude, how boldly we all dare to disobey God! Only think on the manner in which the Sabbath is usually spent, and how plainly the commandment forbids all we do.

Ger. Yes, dear Edward, he is a long suffering God, who bears with us. I sometimes tremble when I see the daring disregard of his plainest commandments, which my very dearest friends venture upon. It is an awful thought. But go on.

Edw. Mr. Percy described many characters. Our aunt Stanly most exactly—so formally exact in external religious observances, while her whole heart is engaged with this world.

Ger. Edward how can you judge of aunt Stanly's heart? Those descriptions are not intended to lead us to judge of others; they are intended to lead us to self examination, that we ascertain in what respects our own characters resemble those portrayed by the servant of God, whose duty it is thus to search and probe the heart, that it may be healed.

Edw. Well, I only wish aunt Stanly had been there. She must have recognized herself; prayers in the morning and at the theatre in the evening, and——

Ger. I will not hear aunt Stanly's character. Did he not describe Edward Aberley! (*smiling.*)

Edw. Oh yes, and Mamma, too—so fond of her children, yet so—

Ger. No more, Edward, it is not right—indeed it is not.

Edw. Now, Gertrude I have said nothing, so it is you who are wrong in anticipating an unfavourable character of Mamma

Ger. I confess it is so; but I would rather hear Mr. Percy's character of you.

Edw. His character of Mamma, however, softened me to tears, and he concluded by saying there was the best hope of such characters; for they erred not from want of candour, but from want of light; and that they dreaded becoming truly and strictly devoted to God, not from indifference or enmity to real religion, but from a sincere apprehension, that in so devoting themselves, they would in some indefinite way be neglecting duties that they ought to fulfil.

Ger. Well, I do think so of Mamma sometimes: But no more of her. Why are you so long in coming to the character I most wish to hear described?

Edw. Oh, because it comes so close: but I want your advice, so you shall have all. Mr. Percy kept my character to the last; and when he began to describe it, the interest and feeling of his voice and manner seemed to increase. I think I remember his very words. He said—"There is still another class of persons to whom I must speak, and ask them why they do not come to Christ that they may have life? Or, perhaps, I may rather ask you, my young friends, (for to you I speak,) *Do you know* Him whom you did

regard and reject? No, you know him not. I think I shall be able to convince you of this, if you will yield me your attention for a few moments, and let your hearts apply candidly to the questions I shall ask you. Do you not believe, that if you listen to the remonstrance of the text, and attempt to come to Christ for life, that the first step you must take would be to give up all earthly enjoyments—all that at this moment is most attractive to you? And all this you imagine must be given up for what? you cannot say for what. To you the idea of becoming religious is altogether an idea of deprivation—of giving up—of leaving what is delightful. You see that those of your own age who become religious, immediately lose all relish for their former and your present pursuits. You see that they immediately begin to love the house of God. They love to be alone, that they may pray, and read, and learn more of God. They see every thing in a new light; and their opinions and sentiments on almost every subject differ from yours; but all this, though an unaccountable something may lead you to respect and love them, does not convince you that they have in reality found that happiness which they assure they have found. You only regard them as gloomy; or as having been so alarmed at the preacher, or by some other means, respecting the future state of their souls in another world, that under the strength of the impression, they became willing in order to secure their salvation hereafter, to live a life of gloom, and wretchedness, and self-denial in this world. Is not this really your only idea respecting religion, that it is the endur-

ing of gloom and deprivation in this world, to purchase by that means happiness in the next? but you entertain this opinion, because you do not know that Lord and Master, for whom Christians give up all that he disapproves. If you knew him as they know him, you would feel as they do, that he, and he only, is deserving of that place in your hearts, which he, and he only, can fill. These are perhaps words without meaning to you. Let me try to portray some faint traces of that all-glorious character; or rather let me ask you to look around on what you know and acknowledge to be his works, and say, do you trace nothing of his greatness, and also of his tenderness, on the face of his creaton? Why is it all so fair and lovely? Why such profusion of all that is sublime, and soft, and touching? Why such perfection and beauty? and whence the power which these inanimate objects possess, to attract and charm the heart? and who formed the heart to feel that power? Is there no trace of the footsteps of one here, who if we could find him, we would love with love unspeakable? But, my young friends, lovely and touching as his works of creation are, his works of redemption are still more lovely. His works of creation ought to lead us to seek after their all-glorious Creator, but in his works of redemption he has brought himself near to us. He has left that glory in which he dwelt with the Father; and where those highest spirits who are permitted to approach nearest to him are so overwhelmed by the brightness of the vision, that they veil their faces with their wings, and express continually their adoration, holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty! this glorious

Jehovah, in love to us, that he might bring himself near, close to *us*, took our nature into his, that he might in that nature fulfil the broken law of God for *us*, that he might bear the punishment due to *us*, for the breach of that law; and that he might experience and know all *our* feelings and griefs. He became our very nearest friend; for what other friend both sees our inmost feelings, and feel them also? He is the omnipotent God, and also man, and in that character he is at this moment present with us, reproaching us in the most tender and condescending terms, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." I have purchased eternal life for you, but you despise that for which I laid down my life. You have ruined yourselves—you have disobeyed the laws of God. "There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby ye can be saved," but mine, yet ye will not come unto me! I have left the glory of the father—I have taken the form of a servant, and have endured the cross for you, and ye will not come unto me! "Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord; for what things are they that ye reject the Lord Jehovah?" And then, oh Gertrude! how forcibly Mr. Percy spoke: and what fools he made those appear who preferred the trifles of this world to the salvation, and friendship, and guidance of the Son of God. He described my character—in youth—health—with the advantages of education, friends, fortune, influence, and not a thought but to gratify the passion of the moment. He painted my guilt and responsibility so as to make me tremble, and inwardly to implore God to have mercy upon me. He then described what

such a one might be, if, convinced of his sins, he fled for refuge to Christ, who would receive him, and give him a new heart, and put his spirit within him, to lead him into all truth. Then, oh Gertrude! such a character as he described! a blessing to society—happy in his own soul—his Master's image becoming more and more visble in him. I cannot say all he said, but I can never hope to be such a one. Oh that I could! (*Covers his face with his hands and bursts into tears.*)

Ger. And why not hope my dearest Edward? Mr. Percy did not say you could make yourself such a character.

Edw. Oh, no! He said I could do nothing without Christ. It was on this point he so forcibly convinced me I had hitherto erred. He said we could no more produce even one good thought without Him, than a branch could produce fruit, if separated from its parent tree.

Ger. Then, my brother, to become such a character, you have only to come to Christ, to believe in him, to learn his will from his own word; and when you have learnt it, to implore him to enable you to obey it.

Edw. This is exactly what I wish to do, Gertrude; but in town I cannot. You know I am so engaged, I never have a moment to myself. Besides, I dread entering again into the society of those with whom I have of late associated. Some of them are really worthless. I have told you that I was disgusted with them before I heard Mr. Percy; yet I do not think I could shake them off; and I know, were I to go to Calmly Lodge, they would follow me there. But I must have peace,

and am determined to try to make myself acquainted with the will of my God and Saviour. I wish you could be with me, wherever I am Gertrude. You are thoughtful. Can you assist me in deciding what to do?

GER. Suppose you should go to your estate in Scotland for a short time. You know Mr. Lornton wishes you to go and show yourself to your tenantry there, as he says, and you have evaded complying with his wishes these two last summers. You could enjoy perfect peace there.

EDW. An excellent thought! Only I cannot have you with me.

GER. Perhaps I may follow you. Mamma has several times, of late, said that she wished to visit Scotland. Possibly your going there may induce her to shorten our London gaieties and follow you. In the mean time, I am sure you will find a person who will be able and willing to assist you in your search after religious knowledge in the clergyman of the parish.

EDW. I remember him. He was very old, and I thought very stupid.

GER. Oh! but there is a new clergyman, Dr. Dugald Ross, who I am certain is really a Christian.

EDW. How do you know about him, Gertrude?

GER. I have seen letters from him to Mamma, about the education of the children on the estate.

EDW. To Mamma! Why did he not write to me?

GER. He wrote first to Mr. Lornton, who answered coldly that you would soon be of age, and he would not interfere in such matters. Mr. Ross then wrote to Mamma in the gentlest and most Christian spirit, tell-

ing her of Mr. Lornton's reply, but urging the immediate necessities of the people, and their anxiety to have their children, and, indeed, some of their grown-up young people, taught to read the word of life. Mamma employed me to answer the letter, and to say exactly what Mr. Lornton had said. I did so as gently as I could; but at the end of my letter, requested him to let me know what the expense would be of beginning a school, and what his wishes were. I showed my letter to Mamma, and she did not object to my sending it. I very soon received an answer which delighted and astonished me. I found that such a school as Mr. Ross and the people wished to begin, would scarcely cost so much annually as I had formerly spent in trinkets and the merest useless trifles. All that was wanted, was a schoolmaster's salary, and some other trifling expenses. I entreated Mamma's permission to have it begun, and at last, she yielded, saying, that when you were of age you might continue or stop it as you choose.

Edw. And you, Gertrude, out of your allowance, which is not an eighth part of what I receive, are supporting a school on my property. Dear Gertrude, you have begun my duties for me.

Ger. Oh, if you knew how it delights me to find that it is in my power to be the means of having so many young creatures brought to the knowledge of their God and Saviour, you would envy me my feelings.

Edw. And tell me, is this because you believe your doing so is pleasing to God?

Ger. Not exactly; there is so much evil in all I do -so very much of self—so much forgetfulness, that

without Christ I can do nothing—so much of a feeling that I have some merit in my poor imperfect performances of duty, that I am constantly permitted in some way to feel how weak and sinful I am; so that, when I go to my knees, I have nothing but confessions to make and pardon and mercy to seek. But I know that, if I sin, "I have an advocate with the Father;" and if I confess my sins, God is righteous in forgiving my sins for his sake; and that his blood cleanseth from all sin.

Edw. But what then gives you such delight in having it in your power to begin this school?

Ger. Many things. I feel honoured and softened in thinking that my Lord has shown me a way of which I was quite ignorant, where I can employ his gifts so as to promote the knowledge of himself, and teach the way of salvation through him to some of my young fellow sinners. And when I reflect on the different manner in which I have hitherto spent his gifts, I cannot express the love and gratitude which fills my heart to that Lord who has so manifested his glory to my soul, as to draw me from the world and all that is in it to himself. Such feelings, Edward, are unlike, and O how superior to all other feelings! They soften, they purify, they elevate, they subdue and overcome the heart, and bring it into willing, irresistible captivity to Christ.

Edw. What ought I do first, Gertrude?

Ger. First go to Christ in prayer. Pour out your heart to him. He knows you far better than you know yourself. Endeavour to open your whole heart and soul to him, as to a near, and present, and most tender friend. Give yourself to him. He commands you to give him your heart.

EDW. But I have been so sinful—must I not first repent?

GER. You must repent, Edward—but are you not relapsing into that error from which you supposed Mr. Percy had freed you in asking that question? If you can do *nothing* without Christ, can you *repent* without him? No, my dear Edward, but, "Him hath God exalted to give repentance." You have no power but as you receive it form Him. Go, wait on him—seek a new heart from him.

EDW. Good night, my dear Gertrude.

GER. Good night, my own beloved brother—more than a common brother—a brother, I hope, in soul also—a brother and friend forever!

Morning.

A Breakfast-room in Mrs. Aberley's house.

GERTRUDE, (*alone.*)

GER. (*Rises and looks at a clock on the mantlepiece.*) Eleven o clock! and no one come to breakfast.

Enters a servant.

SER. (*presenting a letter.*) My master desired me, Ma'am, to give that letter into your own hands.

GER. Is your master gone out, Thomas.

SER. Yes, Ma'am; he set off for the country at eight this morning.

GER. At eight this morning! very well, Thomas.

[*Exit* THOMAS.

GER. (*Hastily opens the letter and reads.*) "My dearest Gertrude.—After leaving you last night, I at-

tempted to follow your advice. I knelt down alone in presence of God. A strange kind of awe came over my soul. I could not address God. I felt that I knew him not. I recollected that you had said, "Go to Christ, pour out your heart to him as to your nearest and tenderest friend." I attempted to do so, but neither did I know him; and my ideas were vague and undefined. Mr. Percy's text came into my thoughts, "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life;" and I said 'Lord, I come unto thee; cast me not from thee but give me life.' I remained on my knees, and I felt an awful kind of pleasure in the idea that I was in the presence of God. My sins against God, however, arose on my recollection, and for a time so appalled me, that I had almost risen from my knees in despair; but I remembered your words, 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' 'If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,'—and 'the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth from all sin.' I attempted to confess my sins, but found them too numerous—they seemed more than the hairs of my head. Yet a strange and heavenly peace of mind followed. I felt my breast unloaded of a weight. Still, however, I see every thing most indistinctly, and feel very ignorant, but long for knowledge. I am determined to set out for Scotland immediately. Jarvis is preparing, and I hope to be on the road, with only my Bible as a companion, an hour hence. I have written to my mother, for I dreaded explanations. Do not mention my state of feelings to any one. I may change; yet pray for

me, Gertrude, that I do not. Write to me—write as to an ignorant child, and advise me. Ever yours,

E. A."

GER. Dear, dear Edward! (*Raising her eyes to heaven.*) Lord, I thank thee; perfect thy own work. Who would have thought of this poor straying one, this lost sheep, brought back by the good all-merciful Shepherd! (*Again reads the letter*) No, dear Edward, you will not change! You have come to One, from whose love no power shall ever separate you.—(*Remains some time in a musing posture, then sings.*)

"Can the fond mother e'er forget
The infant whom she bore?
And can its plaintive cries be heard,
Nor move compassion more?

She may forget; nature may fail
A parent's heart to move;
But Sion in my heart shall dwell
In everlasting love."

(*While Gertrude sings, Mrs. Aberley enters softly and unperceived by her. Mrs. Aberley stops near the door and listens.*)

GER. (*Sings.*)

"Full in my sight, upon my hands
I have engraved her name;
My hands shall build her ruined walls,
And raise her broken frame."

(*Stops.*)

Mrs. ABER. Sweetly sung, Gertrude; but am I never again to hear that voice except in mournful hymns?

GER. Not mournful, Mamma; to me soothing and elevating beyond expression. But you have only to

say the word, and I shall rejoice in singing whatever my own dear Mamma will listen to. *(Playfully kissing her mother's cheek.)*

Mrs. Aber. Thank you, my good child. I wish you could sing or charm away this sad pain in my poor head. O how my temples throb!

Ger. Dear Mamma, you have been too long without breakfast. Let me charm away the pain with tea or coffee.

Mrs. Aber. No, love. I have no desire for breakfast. Your charm must reach my heart. Here is a letter from your brother, telling me he has set off for Scotland early this morning. No power of his guardian's or mine could persuade him a fortnight ago to leave London and go there, even for a few days. *(Rising and pressing her hand on her forehead.)* I cannot endure this pain. Something dreadful must have taken him there—something that required concealment.

Ger. Do not alarm yourself, dear Mamma; I assure you that nothing you dread has taken Edward to Scotland.

Mrs. Aber. Do you then know, Gertrude, what has determined him so suddenly to go there? You do not answer—Oh, Anna's conjecture is too true! and your new religion has taught you to disregard difference of rank—and this companion he has chosen for life will be received by you, however vulgar and uneducated she may be, as a dear sister.—And Edward has made you his confidant—I see it all now! *(Bitterly.)*

Ger. Mamma, you are unjust to us both. Edward

has carried no companion with him to Scotland but his Bible.

Mrs. ABER. His Bible!

GER. Yes, Mamma, his Bible. He at last feels the folly of pretending to be a Christian while he is ignorant of the source of Christianity, and of its doctrines and precepts; and he has gone to Scotland for no other purpose than to enjoy leisure and solitude, that he may seriously examine the scriptures for himself. I at first hesitated whether I should tell what he desired for a time might be kept secret, even from you, but I am sure if he saw your anxiety, he himself would relieve you from it.

Mrs. ABER. (*Thoughtfully.*) How strange! Gertrude, my dear, he has told this ridiculous story to induce you to attempt preventing any interference on the part of his guardian. But it was unnecessary.—Mr. Lornton is not a man to act with sufficient promptitude to prevent what a spirit like Edward's has planned. After measures can alone be resorted to now.

GER. I am certain, Mamma, that Edward has not deceived me. With all his faults, he is incapable of such as you now accuse him of.

Mrs. ABER. Well, Gertrude, I hope he is, and I almost believe he is—yet I find it very difficult to credit what you tell me. Was it your instructions that led him to those serious reflections on his ignorance?

GER. No, Mamma, it was the instructions of Mr. Percy.

Mrs. ABER. Mr. Percy! Now that revives my suspicions. Surely he has attempted to delude you, and has indeed succeeded.

GER. No, Mamma, I cannot believe it; and, as a further proof of his sincerity, he wishes very much that you, and Anna, and I, should follow him to Scotland immediately.

Mrs. ABER. Oh that I could believe he was really sincere in that wish!

GER. (*Smiling.*) Even if you should find him as gloomy and enthusiastic as you consider me, Mamma?

Mrs. ABER I would give all I possess on earth to see him like you, Gertrude.

GER. Mamma, how can I understand you?

Mrs. ABER. Do you not, my love, see the difference in this case? Edward is the most impetuous, ungovernable of human beings. He has got into the most extravagant, thoughtless, and, I fear, dissolute society.—There is nothing I do not dread on his account. All those young men who adopt the mysterious and enthusiastic views of religion which you have adopted, immediately become changed in the most extraordinary manner. Look at Harcourt—at Sorley—at your cousin Ashton. They were more irregular than your brother, and only see them now. They may be ridiculous with their Sunday schools, and their missionary meetings, and their presents of religious books to every body; but who ever heard of the slightest irregularity of conduct in any of them since their adoption of those opinions? On the contrary, Harcourt, who found his mother's house, from her constant ill-health, so irksome, that he never staid a moment with her that he could get away, now resides with her constantly—reads to her—prays by her—brings a few agreeable people to visit her when she can receive them—in short, is as

tender and attentive to her as if he was a daughter, so that she cannot mention him without tears of affection. Sorley is the greatest comfort to his family; and you know your uncle Ashton before his death appointed your cousin sole guardian to all his younger children, though, five years ago, he was on the eve of disinheriting him for his extravagance and folly. Oh! how happy I should be to see Edward as ridiculous as the most ridiculous of them all, were he like them in purity of morals and kindness of affection.

GER. Oh Mamma! what praise you have bestowed on that principle—that new life-giving principle, which performs such strange things! Can you look at such effects, and still think they proceed from no other and greater cause than enthusiasm, or a heated imagination? How forcibly every word you have just uttered, my dearest mother, confirms the truth of those passages in Scripture, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. All old things have passed away; behold all things have become new."

Mrs. ABER. Yes, Gertrude, when people have been in the habit of openly breaking the laws of God, they must become changed creatures before they can be esteemed Christians; but those who have always, as far as human imperfection would allow them, endeavoured to obey those laws, cannot be meant in Scripture to require so complete a change. Why, my love, if such people were to become new creatures, they would become wicked, for they have all their lives been attempting to do whatever appeared to them to be right.

GER. Oh no, Mamma! That same Spirit who renews the heart of the openly rebellious, must also re-

new the heart of those who prefer any created good to God, or they cannot truly be Christians. Do you remember the young ruler mentioned in Scripture, Mamma, who said he had kept all the commandments from his youth, but who went away sorrowful, when Jesus told him he must leave his earthly possessions and follow him.

Mrs. Aber. I do, Gertrude, and see perfectly your aim in reminding me of him. You mean to infer that though your mother has attempted to fulfil her duties to the best of her power, yet love and devotion to God has not been her motive. Now, suppose you have said this, and proceed.

Ger. I was not speaking of you, Mamma.

Mrs. Aber. My dear Gertrude, do you think I do not perceive that you wish often, by what you say, though you cannot exactly say so? But, my love, I desire you to speak quite freely. Forget that I am any thing to you but your friend. You must believe that I really desire your everlasting happiness. I believe you desire the same from me—tell me your thoughts then with perfect freedom.

Ger. (*Taking her mother's hand and kissing it.*) Well then, my dearest, most beloved, and kindest of earthly friends, I confess that my thoughts, night and day, are occupied about you, and great part of my prayers are on your behalf; for I do not think you know that God who is revealed in Scripture. You have not formed your ideas of Him from Scripture. You do not see his awful holiness—you do not see his abhorrence of all sin—as they are revealed there. You do not see the extent of that holiness

which he requires from his creatures—that the least sin or evil cannot be admitted into his presence. "He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity;" and therefore as our hearts, even the purest of our hearts, produce spontaneously unholy thoughts and tempers, it is impossible we should ever be where he is until they are changed. You have not, I think, considered this closely, my dearest mother.—You therefore feel no uneasiness—no dread of being called unchanged into his presence, where you would not be permitted, unless changed by his Spirit, to remain one moment—

Mrs. Aber. Allow me to interrupt you, my love. Tell me truly, do you believe really that your heart is so changed that it now produces only such thoughts as might be permitted in the presence of that holiness you described?

Ger. Oh no, no! But I have been led to see how dreadful it would be to be called into the presence of that most incomprehensibly spotless holiness, with a heart whose very nature it is to produce such thoughts as would cause me in a moment to be cast out of his sight forever. This, with the recollection of my innumerable acts of disobedience to the revealed will of this holy God, made me so miserable that I searched the Scriptures constantly to discover how I might be pardoned and purified; and this, I think, my dearest Mother, you have never found it necessary, from an awakened conscience, to do; therefore you are ignorant of Christ, and of the only way of peace with God. You have not come to him. You do not rest your only hope of salvation on him. Oh! had you ever felt as I

did, when I found those texts of Scripture, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."—"He that believeth on him is not condemned;" and many such, you would understand what I mean by knowing Christ. We cannot know him till we feel our need of him. Mamma, I do not think you have ever felt your need of him. You seem to think that if you do all you can to obey the laws of God, the death of the Saviour will atone for those failings which overtake you, if you, on your part, heartily repent of them.

Mrs. Aber. Certainly, my dear, I do believe that if I obey the laws of God as far as I can, and repent of my failure, I shall be saved at last for his sake who died to save the world.

Ger. But, indeed, Mamma, that is not the religion of the Bible, and greatly dishonours Christ.

Mrs. Aber. You make me smile, Gertrude. You! a girl of eighteen! tell me that what I have heard so long from the pulpit; from clergymen, the mildest and most candid of men, and the most indulgent to the faults of others; in short, from every body, and from almost every book I ever read on the subject, is not the religion of the Bible.

Ger. Mr. Percy, Mamma and all those clergymen, who preach as he does; Mr. Harcourt, my cousin Ashton, and all whose religion has that influence on their conduct which you describe as so wonderful, consider such a view of the Christian religion as altogether erroneous, and incapable of producing any purifying effect on the heart and conduct. Oh Mamma, do go

and hear Mr. Percy. I am sure he will convince you of the truth of what I say.

Mrs. Aber. No, my dear, I will not go to hear Mr. Percy. That would only lead me to place one man's opinion against that of another, and bring me no nearer to the truth: but I will read the Bible, and endeavour to judge for myself.

Ger. Dear Mamma, that is all I want.

Mrs. Aber. Do you think then, Gertrude, that I never read the Bible?

Ger. No indeed, Mamma; I know you read the Bible; but I think you value only the moral precepts, and look on the other parts as mysterious, and of little importance.

Mrs. Aber. You have said one thing, Gertrude, since we began this conversation, which, I confess, has placed sins of thought and feeling in a different point of view from that in which I have hitherto considered them. I refer to what you said respecting the natural, spontaneous production of evil in our hearts. It is true thoughts do naturally arise there. It is impossible to deny it: and it is evident that, with such a source of evil remaining within us, we cannot be admitted into the presence of that God who is a spirit, and sees our inmost thoughts, and is of purer eyes than to look on evil. Tell me how, according to your new system, we are delivered from this propensity to evil. Is it at death?

Ger. Only if we are true believers, Mamma. Our Lord himself says, that if we do not believe in him, we shall die in our sins. We are sanctified, or made holy, by faith in him.

Mrs. Aber. Speak plainly, my dear. I do not un-

derstand that mystical language. Do you yourself understand the meaning of the words you use, when you say, "sanctified by faith in him?"

GER. They are Scripture words, Mamma, and I think I understand them. I shall try to put their meaning into common language. When we feel, as you have allowed you do, that our hearts are naturally evil, and know that those evil hearts have led us to disobey the known laws of God, our Creator and Judge, we must feel that we are guilty in his sight; and that unless there is some way by which we may obtain pardon from him, we must be condemned to the punishment due to guilt. You allow this, Mamma?

Mrs. ABER. I do, my love; go on.

GER. Well, Mamma, this is the very point at which I think you and I separate. You say that our only way is to repent, and do better in future, and then, for Christ's sake, we shall be safe. But I feel that in this way the heart is left in just the state in which it was; we receive no new power to withstand temptation.—That source of evil from whence you have admitted such thoughts do arise as would banish us from the presence of a holy God, is not taken away. Repenting of sin, Mamma, cannot take away the source of sin. May we not continue to sin, and repent for ever, and yet be no nearer having a holy heart than at first? Now, the Scriptures say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," and, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Thus, I see the way in which I have my sins pardoned, and also have my heart, the source of sin, changed or renewed.—

You know, Mamma, John the Baptist said, "that he who should come after him, that was Christ, should baptize with the Holy Ghost." It is this baptism of heart by the Holy Spirit—this purifying of that source of evil —this being "born of the Spirit," which accompanies faith in Christ, that I mean, Mamma, when I say "sanctified by faith in him;" or, made holy by faith in him. My sins are washed away by his blood, and my heart is made holy by his Spirit; and those benefits I receive, not on account of any merit which attaches to any doings of my own, but simply by believing in all that Christ has done and suffered to procure the salvation of my soul. I am told in the Bible, that Christ "was wounded for *our* transgressions; he was bruised for *our* iniquities; the chastisement of *our* peace was upon him; and with his stripes *we* are healed." I believe this, and with love and adoration of my God and Saviour, receive the blessed truth into my soul, and really feel the benefits of it. Thus it is by believing on him by faith, that the purifying effect of his blood is brought into my soul, and actually cleanses me from sin. I no longer feel burdened by its guilt. I have laid it on the head of my glorious sacrifice, who has borne its punishment in my place, and has carried it by death forever into the land of forgetfulness. Thus my soul is relieved from the guilt of sin by faith in him. My heart, the source of sin, is also purified and renewed by faith in him. The Holy Spirit, with whom he baptizes, enters into my soul—awakens my conscience—convinces me of sin—enlightens my understanding to perceive my need of Christ—manifests to me his character so as to attract the supreme love of

my heart—leads me to him for pardon and peace—unites me to him—I become one with him.

Mrs. Aber. Again you are very mystical, my dear.

Ger. But, Mamma, this is a great mystery. St. Paul says it is so. Yet this union with Christ by faith is the only means by which we can become holy.

Mrs. Aber. But, my love, you can put your meaning into other words.

Ger. I shall attempt to do so. You know, Mamma, Christ says, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.—Without me ye can do nothing;" and St. Paul says, "Christ is made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." So that believing in Christ, or faith in Christ, must have a deeper and far different meaning from that vague acquiescence in the truth of the doctrine that Christ died to save the world, which I think, dear Mamma, is what you consider to be all that is meant by the term Faith. They that truly believe in Christ become new creatures. He sends his Spirit into their hearts to renew them after his own glorious image. "Christ hath loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water," or purifying of the Spirit, "that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having a spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." This is the great work that is going on in the heart of a christian. "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the

glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image." "Now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."—Oh Mamma, only enter into the meaning of these words!

Mrs. Aber. Well, my love, I certainly wish to do so: but I believe you attach a meaning to them more mystical, and which involves greater singularity of opinions and conduct than is necessary. Should I suppose you right, Gertrude, I must conclude that some of those whom I loved and looked up to as the most excellent and amiable of human beings, have lived, and (*with emotion*) have died in dangerous error.

Ger. Dear Mamma, I know how painful such thoughts are: but ought they to deter us from venturing candidly to examine the Scriptures? May we not rather use them as a test to try whether God has indeed the supreme place in our hearts? or whether—but I shall not proceed. Dear Mamma, you cannot know what effect the nearer approach of death may have had on the minds of those beloved friends you mean; at least on those who died at a distance from you.

Mrs. Aber. True, my love. Let us say no more on this subject. You know, Gertrude, that it was for your sake, and to fulfil what I considered a duty, that I have lived winter after winter in London, and latterly accompanied you and your sister, wherever I thought it was suitable for you to be. After you deserted us, I conceived it my duty still to attend your sister; but you know, my dear, I had little pleasure in all this, ex-

cept what arose from seeing you approved of, and happy; and from the hope that you might form friendships and connexions in the society into which you were introduced, which might secure your future happiness and respectability. You, Gertrude, have strangely disappointed all my hopes: yet I confess there is a something in the steadiness with which you adhere to what you consider the will of God, joined to your uniform anxiety to please me, where that will does not interfere, which makes it impossible for me to disbelieve that some very powerful impression regarding religion has been made on your mind. You ascribe this impression to heaven, and consider those who do not seek and obtain it as still devoid of true religion. I do not say that I absolutely believe you are right, but I think your arguments are worthy of attention. I have indeed, though superficially, attempted to attend to some of them. You have this morning increased my desire to examine the Bible on some particular points, and I should greatly enjoy a time of leisure to do so. If I find, therefore, that Edward has really gone to Scotland, as you believe, to learn what true religion is I shall most willingly follow him, and join in his search. I am afraid, however, that Anna will not wish to accompany us.

GER. I hear her footstep approaching.

Enter ANNA.

ANNA. Has Gertrude given you any intelligence respecting Edward, Mamma?

Mrs. ABER. Yes, my dear. But how pale and *mis-rested* you look!

ANNA. Oh, I shall soon revive if I go with you into the open air. Let us drive a few miles out of town,

and get some fresh flowers at Duncan's. But what has Gertrude told you, Mamma? Tell me, Gertrude, while I try to swallow some breakfast. I have no appetite.

Mrs. Aber. Anna, will you go to Scotland?

Anna. To Scotland! are you serious, Mamma?

Mrs. Aber. Your brother is gone there, and Gertrude says, is anxious that we should follow him. If I find that he is serious, then I shall be so also.

Anna. To Scotland! I cannot trust my senses—at this season too, when parties have multiplied upon us. Well, if I am to be no happier than I was last night, I shall not lose much. But our quadrille party at Mrs. Anson's—It would be treating her extremely ill if I deserted it, after having practised with her daughters all the winter. (*Shaking her head thoughtfully.*) You know, Mamma, that is impossible. Gertrude, why do you smile? Do you think it such a trifle to be disobliging and uncivil?

Ger. I think it possible that some other young lady may be found *nearly* capable of supplying your place.

Anna. Oh, indeed, it is not so easy; and, besides, every body is engaged long ago. But what is that you are about? You are become so very industrious, you seem to think it sinful to be a moment without a rag and a needle, like the children at the charity schools, that Cousin Ashton will drag us to admire. Are you really going to mend that old pocket-handkerchief?

Ger. (*Laughing.*) No. You see I am cutting it.

Anna. And what is here? (*Opening a little parcel,*) three baby caps! how nice and soft!

Ger. And just made of an old cambric handkerchief.

Anna. Well, they are very nice. And have you

undertaken to work for the foundling hospital?

GER. *Laughing.*) No: but a poor woman whom Sally knows about, who before had a large family and a sickly husband, has had twins a day or two ago; and having prepared only a very spare provision of clothes for one, the other poor little thing had none.

ANNA. (*Remains thoughtful for a few moments.*)—Gertrude, will you tell me exactly how you have spent your time since we parted last night?

Mrs. ABER. You seem to have forgotten, Anna, that you have not answered my question.

ANNA. Mamma, you will do me a great favour, if God will allow me to have Gertrude's answer first.

Mrs. ABER. Well, let it be so.

ANNA. Gertrude, do tell me how you have spent every hour since we parted?

GER. Dear Anna, I have not spent my time since last night in any unusual manner.

Mrs. ABER. Do, my love, gratify her. I too wish to know.

GER. Well, Mamma, you were scarcely gone, when Edward came to me, and we conversed together for nearly an hour. Then Sally came to me to be taught to read, and to know something respecting another world, and her duty to God. I then remained alone for a short time—a happy little space—after which I went to bed; and while Morley undressed me, she took occasion to say she was afraid she had been disobliging to Miss Anna, but that her temper was naturally hot, and that nobody could help their natural tempers: for Morley often confesses herself to me.

ANNA. I hope you gave her a good lecture.

GER. No; but I tried to convince her that her natural temper might be changed, if she would apply to Him who alone can heal the diseases of the mind and heart. I then went to sleep, and slept profoundly till I was called in time to be dressed by seven o'clock.

ANNA. Morley, I am sure, would not attend you at that hour.

GER. How can you suppose it possible she should, after sitting up for you? Poor thing, I think she would be a better girl if she were taken pains with, but the foolish books she lives upon, make her the ridiculous creature she is.

Mrs. ABER. What books?

GER. Every night that she sits up for you and Anna, Mamma, she employs herself in reading some foolish novel. She told me so herself, and said nothing else would keep her awake. You know, Mamma, the housekeeper makes all the other women go to bed. I gave her other books, but she says my books make her think herself so wicked, she dare not to stay alone; and when she goes down stairs she finds nobody but old John, who scolds her for being idle.

Mrs. ABER. (*Sighing.*) This is not as it ought to be.

ANNA. But go on, Gertrude; what did you do at seven o'clock this morning?

GER. I spent the next hour in private, Anna, and that is the happiest hour of all the day to me, and prepares me for whatever may happen; because I then seek that strength and guidance which is promised to those who ask for them. I then gave Sally another lesson. Then wrote a long letter to Edward, which he asked me to do; and then came hither in hopes of finding you and breakfast; but, being disappointed in that hope, I be-

gan to work these baby caps, and have had time to make one while waiting for you.

Mrs. Aber. My love, are you so long without food?

Ger. Oh, no, Sally is very attentive to me, and the house-keeper also.

Anna. Yes, they all love you. Morley says Miss Gertrude is an angel in temper, and gives no trouble; and that it is an honour to be allowed to attend her, besides making one better, just to see how good and quiet she is.

Ger. Hush, Anna, you ought not to allow Morley to speak so foolishly.

Mrs. Aber. I must say Sally is the most changing creature I ever saw.

Ger. Now, Anna, answer Mamma's question.

Anna. First allow me to tell you how I have spent *my* time since we parted, Gertrude.

Ger. (*Smiling.*) But you know I always displease you by yawning when you describe your parties. But if you will spare me the decorations and dresses, I shall try to be attentive.

Anna. I think my feelings last night were gloomy enough to excite your interest, Gertrude. The promise I had made to you returned to my thoughts continually during the whole evening; and I could not feel that any thing I did or said was such as it ought to have been in that presence in which you had desired me to remember I was. I wished to get rid of the thought, but felt frightened, as if I had been trying to separate myself from God. I can scarcely describe what I felt. I was asked if I was unwell. I was rallied on my absence of manners; and aunt Stanly, who was near to me at one time, said in a whisper to me, "I protest, Anna, you look to-night exactly as Gertrude at the two or three

last balls she honoured with her presence;" and so I answered, "I wish I was like Gertrude. I longed to get home; yet when I found myself alone I was no happier; for I could no more feel then that I was worthy to be in the presence of God than I was before. Oh! I have passed a wretched night, falling asleep and then waking in a fright. My mind was too uneasy to suffer me to sleep. Now I will answer your question, Mamma. If Mr. Percy was in Scotland, I should like to go there; but I would rather hear him than any other being I know. Oh, Mamma, Gertrude is more in the right than I am. I am sure she is.

Mrs. Aber. Anna, we must examine this matter more closely. Gertrude tells me your brother has gone to Scotland for the single purpose of enjoying solitude and leisure, that he may read the scriptures. I wish also to have some quiet time for the same purpose. As to your two objections, quadrille party and to Mr. Percy, I think you must try to get over the first; and Gertrude says the clergyman at Arnavoir is of the same sentiments with Mr. Percy.

Anna. Is he so? Then I shall easily reconcile myself to the idea of Mrs. Anson's displeasure. But only think of Edward? Well, I have thought him very odd of late! Do you wish to go to Scotland?

Ger. I do very much indeed.

Mrs. Aber. Well then, I shall write this day to Edward, and in the mean time we shall make arrangements for leaving town. If your brother answers, as we hope he will, then we shall go to Scotland; if not, we shall all be glad to go for a time to Calmly Lodge.

END OF PART FIRST.

INTRODUCTORY SKETCH.

PART II.

After the last conversation mentioned in the preceding pages. Mrs. Aberley wrote to her son and prepared to follow him immediately to Scotland, should his answer confirm Gertrude's information respecting the motives which induced him so unexpectedly to leave London. Before Mrs. Aberley received his answer, however, she was called upon to witness a scene which powerfully convinced her of the insufficiency of her own religious principles to support an immortal soul in the prospect of death and eternity. Her sister-in law, Mrs. Ashton, was taken alarmingly ill; and when at her own request, informed by her physicians of the truth, which was, that though they did not consider her danger immediate, they had no hope of her recovery, the appalling effect on her mind of this certain and near approach of death, was too powerful to be concealed. The thought of entering, perhaps unprepared, into the presence of God, and into a state of being which must endure to eternity, whatever was her doom, overcame all those other most painful thoughts attendant on the death-bed of a mother, in leaving a family of orphans. Mrs. Ashton's religious opinions and those of Mrs. Aberley had been nearly the same. Charles Ashton had indeed succeeded in leading his mother to adopt some opinions more scrip-

tural than those she formerly had entertained; yet she had not really abandoned that system of religion on which she placed her hopes of heaven; and though she rejoiced in her sons reformation, and attended whatever church he wished, yet this proceeded more from a desire to indulge him in any way which tended to cherish those principles which produced such effects than from any conviction of the superior efficacy of those principles.

Mrs. Aberley now attempted to give that comfort to her sister which she herself supposed would arise on a death bed from the recollection of a life of amiableness and respectability; but she saw that Mrs. Ashton listened without receiving a ray of consolation or pleasure from any thing she said. On the contrary, if Gertrude offered to make a remark, her aunt seemed to feel it deeply, as an undeniable truth.—Mrs. Ashton indeed clung to Gertrude, whose humble and simple views and expressions on religious subjects, were more effectual in overcoming the gloom of her mind, than the deeper and perhaps more elevated views of her son. Gertrude's society became absolutely necessary to her aunt; while Mrs. Aberley perceived, that, though she did not exactly say so, her sister regarded her as one who, like herself, knew little of that religion which prepares and emboldens the soul to meet its God. This joined to letters she received from Edward, confirming all that Gertrude had told her respecting him, led Mrs. Aberley to begin, with very deep interest, that examination of Scripture she had proposed. During her sister's illness she went to no parties, and gave none; and much of the time which was not spent with her sis-

ter, or with her interesting young family, was devoted to the study of the Bible, and in prayer to God for assistance to understand it. The truth gradually dawned on her mind, and become more and more clear as she proceeded in her search. She perceived that her chief errors had arisen from ignorance of those truths so strongly expressed in Scripture: the *natural* alienation of the affections from God; and the method God had appointed to do away that alienation, and reconcile the heart to himself. Ignorant of those truths, she had been labouring with this alienated heart to fulfil her task of duties, in the hope, perhaps undefined, of propitiating that Being, whom she supposed she loved, not because, as with other objects of love, it was her delight to seek His presence, and her chief joy to have communion with him; but because loving God was one of those many things which every person knew to be right, and one of those conditions on the fulfilment of which she hoped to be entitled to heaven. She now perceived that she did not love God in the scripture sense, and that, in reality, she knew not Christ—in short, that her religion and that of the New Testament were totally different. There, Christ was all; in her religion, Christ was distant and unknown. There, He was the only way to the Father; the mediator between God and man; the propitiation for sin; the High Priest in Heaven who continually interceded for his people; the advocate with the Father; he who made reconciliation between the soul and God; he whom true believers loved with joy unspeakable, with such love as led them to long for death, that they might depart and be with him. Of such faith in Christ, or love to him

Mrs. Aberly acknowledged to her own mind she knew nothing, and consequently that she was ignorant of, and not reconciled to, that God who can only be approached through Christ. These were painful and humbling convictions; but Mrs. Aberley was really searching for truth, and she persevered the more earnestly in her search, on discovering that she had, while supposing herself acquainted with the Scriptures, been almost ignorant of them. She now also frequently met with Mr. Percy in her sister's sick room. Charles Ashton had prevailed on his mother to see Mr. Percy, in the hope that he might lead her mind to brighter views. But a death-bed is not often the time when instruction can be received. Mrs. Ashton was unable at times from illness, to attend to Mr. Percy; and indeed was always so weak and languid, that his visits flurried and discomposed her, even when most anxious to see him; and she often derived more benefit from what he had said, when repeated to her afterwards by Gertrude, than from his personal instructions. Mrs. Aberley, however, listened with earnest attention, and joined in his prayer. She also attended his church with Mrs. Ashton's young family, and with Anna; and gradually the way of peace with God declared in the Gospel, opened on her mind with clearness and conviction. She thankfully and joyfully acquiesced in the plan of salvation made known there, as a manifestation of the wisdom and love of God; and as entirely suited to the wants of her soul, and she at least *wished* to receive Christ as her all, and to resign herself wholly to the guidance of his word and spirit.

Anna, during this period of her aunt's last illness,

was at times very miserable. Ignorant on the subject of religion, and not of a character to examine any subject with calm attention; yet sensible that she had resisted the admonitions of her own conscience, the kind expostulations of Gertrude, and the stronger and more alarming remarks of her cousin, she felt a consciousness of guilt in the sight of God, which led her only to think of Him as an object to be dreaded Circumstances added to this uneasiness. The mournful gloom that was cast over the house of her aunt; that deep shadow which precedes the approach of death; Gertrude's anxious seriousness of manner, when for short intervals she left her aunt's room to converse with her; Mrs. Aberley's thoughtfulness and disrelish for any conversation but that of the gravest kind, all tended to increase Anna's uneasiness. Her former pursuits appeared to her now to have been madness and folly. Death, eternity, judgment, were ever in her thoughts, and, with her usual imprudence, she betrayed to every one the dark and unhappy state of her feelings, while, at the same time, she laboured to satisfy her conscience by the most scrupulous exactness in fulfilling what she considered religious duties, and in reproving the neglect of them in others.

At last the hour so much dreaded by poor Mrs. Ashton arrived, and her timid spirit was called to enter its everlasting state of existence.

When Mrs. Aberley had seen every duty of sisterly affection performed, and the orphan family restored to some degree of comfort, she prepared to join her son in Scotland. She and her sister had received many letters from him, each succeeding one expressing the

sentiments of a mind increasing in religious and happy feelings. The expectation of joining him was therefore the more pleasing to Mrs. Aberley and his sisters, after the late sad and painful scenes they had witnessed.

In the following pages are narrated some conversations and events which took place at Arnavoir, commencing on the evening the ladies arrived there.

THE

DECISION.

PART II.

PERSONS INTRODUCED.

MRS. ABERLEY.
EDWARD.
ANNA.
GERTRUDE.
MR. LORNTON.
MR. ASHTON.
MR. ROSS, *Clergyman of the Parish.*
ALAN CAMERON, *an old Soldier.*
PEOPLE.

An Apartment in Arnavoir Castle.
Evening.

MRS. ABERLEY, EDWARD, ANNA, *and* GERTRUDE. EDWARD *seated between* MRS. ABERLEY *and* GERTRUDE; *a hand of each in his:* ANNA *seated on a foot-stool at her mother's feet.*

EDW. How delightful it is to find myself with you all again! You have really tried my patience by your delays. You gave me reason to hope I should see you in a fortnight after I left London, and it is now more than two months.

MRS. ABER. We too, Edward, have longed much to be with you; but you know we found it impossible to get away. First, we had business with Mr. Lornton

that must be transacted before you came of age—then the illness and death of your poor Aunt Ashton made it positive duty for us to remain in London; but we have all learnt much, Edward, during these two last months.

Edw. *(Pressing his mother's hand to his heart.)*—Much indeed.

Mrs. Aber. And the season has advanced, so that we now find Arnavoir in its greatest beauty. How magnificent is the view from that window?

Ger. I cannot for a moment withdraw my eyes from it. How glorious the sun-set must be amidst yon mountains that bound the lake!

Edw. Most glorious indeed. But in the mean time I must entreat you, dear Gertrude, to bestow your attention on an humbler object. I cannot spare it yet, even to my favourite view. But if you will indulge me for another half hour, I then promise you the most glorious view of sun-set you have ever witnessed. Do you see that clump of trees? *(Pointing from the window.)* The view from thence is still finer than from these windows. That is my favourite retreat. There my beloved instructor, Mr. Ross, has spent many an hour with me; and in his society and listening to his heavenly conversation, I have witnessed many sun-sets. I have never met with any one who enjoys the beauties of nature with the rapture he does. He sees God in all his works: and seems to feel his presence continually. We shall, in half an hour, go to that lovely spot. I have invited Mr. Ross to meet us for a short time there. With his assistance, and so fine a portion of the works of God within our view, we may

close the evening in, what Mr. Ross calls, Christian enjoyment.

Anna. Delightful! I long excessively to see your Good Mr. Ross.

Mrs. Aber. Is Mr. Ross a young man?

Edw. He is thirty-four, or thirty-five, but looks older from being a little bald above his forehead; and from the grey hairs which study and grief have mixed with his dark locks.

Mrs. Aber. Does he reside in the old manse near the loch, or has he got a new one?

Edw. He is still in the old one, and I think has no wish for another. It is beautifully situated; and his wife has all within in such perfect order and neatness, that it seems a peaceful little paradise.

Ger. Has Mr. Ross any children?

Edw. Yes, three sweet little creatures. He has lost three.

Ger. And was that the grief which you said had mingled grey hairs with his dark locks? (*Smiling.*)

Edw. It was; but why do you smile, Gertrude?

Ger. Because your love for Mr. Ross has made you poetical in your description of him.

Edw. Well, perhaps it may. There is something elevated, perhaps you would call it poetic, in all my feelings for him. He has been the messenger of light to my soul; and when I see him, I feel as if his presence brought that of his glorious Master nearer to me.

Ger. Ah, no, Edward. That gracious presence is ever nearer you than any human presence can be.—But had this idol of yours made idols of his children?

EDW. No, I will not say that, though perhaps he would allow that he had. You never saw a man so fond of children as he is, yet so gently strict and firm. He told me, that God, by taking his first child, had taught him that he was an hypocrite; for he had often on his knees, and he thought in sincerity, devoted himself and all his to God, to dispose of them as he would, yet, when he took his child from him, his whole soul rose in opposition to his will.

GER. Ah, yes. We know not ourselves, till our heavenly Father in love afflicts us. That is his test of our sincerity.

EDW. When God took a second child, my friend had so far benefitted by the first gracious chastisement, that he was enabled from his heart to say, "Heavenly Father, thy will be done. I am satisfied all must be well." But he then felt as if the lesson of resignation had been learnt, and rested secure in the possession of his remaining treasures. Another lovely, healthy little boy was carried off after a few day's illness: he could not see *why* this blow had followed so rapidly. His wife, too, almost sunk under it, and he dreaded losing her also. These were the darkest hours of his life; yet in them he learnt the great and important lesson, that we know little of God till we know him so as to love him supremely: that true, heart-felt resignation, can only proceed from that manifestation of God in Christ to our souls, which makes all created objects of love really less loved than him. But, Gertrude, are you unwell? You are very pale. I am sure you are ill.

GER. No, dear Edward; but this last high Christian

attainment you have mentioned, has recalled forcibly to my thoughts some sad scenes I have lately witnessed. Oh, I hope there is safety to the soul that takes refuge in Christ, while far, far from such a knowledge of God as Mr. Ross possesses. Yet—(*Stops.*)

Mrs. Aber. Perhaps you do not know, Edward, what a melancholy attendance poor Gertrude has had on my aunt. She could not suffer Gertrude to be for a moment out of her presence night or day.

Edw. I am not ignorant of any particular respecting her attendance on my poor aunt. Charles has written me volumes on the subject.

Ger. (*Sighing.*) Poor Charles! He has now a heavy charge; three younger brothers and two little sisters, orphans. Did I write you, Edward, that Mamma has allowed me to take charge of little Emma and Jane for a time?

Edw. No, but Charles did. He wrote me too that his mother died happily.

Ger. Yes! At last my aunt seemed peaceful and resigned. But, oh! let us prepare for death while we are in health and in vigour of mind, and hasten to acquire the knowledge of that Almighty Saviour who alone can support our souls when the hour comes when we must meet God. It is an awful thing to die while ignorant and unprepared.

Edw. But my aunt was considered a thoughtful, religious person.

Ger. My aunt had naturally weak spirits and bad health, which made her appear grave and thoughtful; but her religious opinions had been entirely adopted from others, not from Scripture: and her personal re-

ligion consisted in some forms which she considered it a merit to go through, even when her health made it almost impossible to do so. On these observances she rested her hopes of eternity. Charles' change of sentiments and conduct led her to examine the subject of religion more closely; but though he had convinced her that she erred in some points, her last illness found her ignorant and unsettled. She was wretchedly weak and timid; and the thoughts of death and eternity were awful to her beyond expression. Oh what poor Charles suffered! It was a painful scene, but I hope closed in peace.

Edw. Do not let us dwell on it, Gertrude, it has affected you too deeply. (*Turning to Anna.*) What change has taken place in Anna's appearance? She looks well, yet somehow very odd.

Mrs. Aber. (*Smiling.*) It is her dress. Anna considers it a part of religion to make herself that figure.

Anna. Dress was my folly, I hope it shall never more be so. How many precious hours I have wasted in adorning this sinful, perishing body! It shall now suffer mortification.

Edw. But people will think you so ridiculous, I fear you will injure the cause you now love.

Anna. I am now indifferent about what people think of me. I have been too long anxious about that. I can now dress in five minutes from having adopted this kind of dress. Formerly I never dressed in less than an hour.

Edw. Do you, Gertrude, think Anna right in this?

Ger. Perhaps we had better consult your instructor, Mr. Ross, how far peculiarities in trifles are right in professors of religion.

ANNA. Is it a trifle, Gertrude, to redeem time?

GER. No, certainly, dear Anna. But you remember what Mr. Percy said the last Sunday we heard him preach, "that we must not perform inferior duties at the expense of superior. But Mr. Ross will put us right on this particular point.

ANNA. Well, perhaps he may. But, in the mean time, you will oblige me by calling our blessed day of rest the Sabbath, not Sunday.

GER. You are right, Anna, I shall try to remember.

EDW. Well, it is remarkable by what different ways we arrive at truth. You, Mamma, by patiently examining the Scriptures, have discovered that you were in error, and are now correcting all your opinions by that infallible test. Gertrude finds truth in the knowledge of Him who is truth. Anna is forced from sin and error into truth by the deep teaching of an awakened and enlightened conscience; and I am arriving at truth I cannot tell how. I seem to be in a new world. I see every thing in a new light. I wonder at my former and at my present self.

GER. (*Smiling.*) And how do you happen to distinguish so nicely respecting others, while so ignorant respecting yourself? have you had no assistance?

EDW. Yes, dear Gertrude, I have asked Mr. Ross questions which have led him to assist me in forming the opinions I have just expressed. Indeed I have made him, almost unconsciously to both of us, intimately acquainted with all our religious sentiments. When you know him, you will be quite satisfied that he should be so. I shall never be able to repay his kindness to me. Every day he has spent some part of his precious time

in instructing me. He has read great part of the Scriptures with me, joining his prayers with his instructions. He has listened patiently to all my ignorant objections, and never left one till he had answered it so as to convince my judgment, and satisfy my heart. I now love him as an elder brother, and would rather spend an hour with him in his sacred little study, than with any other human being in any place on earth. He is a blessing to the parish. You shall see to-morrow with what reverence and respect the people regard him.

Mrs. ABER. To-morrow the people celebrate your coming of age. I do hope, Mr. Ross will be able to prevent such scenes as often take place on similar occasions.

EDW. You shall see. Do you know Ashton is also to be here.

Mrs ABER. Charles! I rejoice to hear it.

EDW. You know before you left London he had refused; but on my assuring him we should have no rejoicings that he would find unsuitable to his present feelings, he consented to come. The little girls follow slowly, and will be here in a few days. But now I think we must go to my favorite retreat amongst yonder trees.

A grove of trees, under which seats are placed, so as to command a view of the River.

Mrs. ABERLEY, EDWARD, ANNA, & GERTRUDE.

GER: This is indeed lovely! Oh, who would live shut up in a town, in whose power it was to be where so much of God is manifested in the glories of his creation! What a profusion of grandeur and beauty

Look, Anna, in this direction. See those mountains, how majestically they tower to heaven, their tops glowing in the beams of the decending sun.

How lovely too, are the glassy waters of the loch, on which they seem to rest. Oh! I feel oppressed as I gaze at the extended glory of that view! How poor, how confined how unworthy, all the adoration that our hearts can offer to that glorious One, who has created such profusion of objects to manifest to us his character, and win our affections to himself!

ANNA. Hush, Gertrude. Some one approaches by that path in the woods behind us.

EDW. It is my friend.

Enter Mr. Ross.

EDW. Welcome, my dear Sir. Allow me to introduce my long-expected friends to you. My Mother and eldest sister are not quite strangers to you, at least by character, and Gertrude, as a corrrespondent, was your first acquaintance.

Mr. Ross. (*With much feeling,*) I am happy to have an opportunity of expressing my own obligations, and those of many a grateful heart in Arnavoir, to Miss Gertrude.

GER. (*Blushing.*) Indeed, Sir, I am the person obliged, and I have to return you my most grateful acknowledgements for pointing out to me a way of being useful where all the trouble was yours, and all, or at least much of the pleasure, was mine.

EDW. (*Smiling.*) No one, then, is to have the merit of doing my duty for me.

Mr. Ross. We shall ascribe it where all merit is ever due to Him who alone can so change any heart,

as to incline it to love his service. I hope, however, that to-morrow Miss Gertrude will feel gratified in seeing so many young people who, through her bounty, are learning the way to salvation.

GER. Shall I have that pleasure to-morrow?

EDW. Yes. To-morrow all the people belonging to the estate have been invited to assemble on the lawn before the house; and the children are prepared to exhibit their accomplishments to you.

GER. I shall be delighted to meet with them.

EDW. This is an evening, my dear Mr. Ross, quite after your own heart.

Mr. Ross. And what heart, my dear Mr. Aberley, could resist the influence of such an evening? God speaks to us by his works; and when their language is all gentleness and tenderness, shall our hearts not be softened, and reply in gratitude and love?

ANNA. Many who are still dead to the power of religion, are yet exquisitely alive to the beauties of nature.

Mr. Ross. Certainly, Miss Aberley; many are so.

ANNA. And they have expressed their admiration in language so powerfully impressive, that they have taken away all my pleasure in beholding those beauties. At this moment Lord Byron's lines, descriptive of his Lara's feelings on viewing the softness of moonlight, and his dark mind turning away from its loveliness, haunts my thoughts.

Mr. Ross. But, Miss Aberley, that description is beautifully just.

ANNA. But I now dislike every association of ideas which leads my mind back to the state it was in when I almost worshipped these authors.

Mr. Ross. Perhaps it would have been better for the world had such authors never written : yet there are some passages, even in Lord Byron, which are exquisitely beautiful from their truth. His delineation of a mind, conscious of its guilt and darkness, and ignorance of the way of peace, do more than impress and excite the imagination—they confirm some of the most important truths of Scripture.

Anna. But still it is the imagination that is captivated by such works—and surely it ought to be forced or starved into subjection.

Mr. Ross. (*Smiling.*) I am afraid it will not submit to be starved, Miss Aberley. It ought to have *proper* food ; but if it is denied such, I fear it will become less nice, and will be satisfied with what is poor and trifling. There is perhaps no other power of the mind which, in youth at least, requires such constant attention.

Anna. I feel so. I cannot get it suppressed.

Mr. Ross. (*Smiling.*) No, I believe that is hopeless. But you can occupy it with what is really important, and really lovely, and really excellent.

Mrs. Aber. You will find my dear Sir, that my poor Anna has some very peculiar ways of thinking. I am rejoiced to think she will have it in her power to receive instruction from you. Edward is already deeply your debtor ; and I am afraid you will find us all anxious to encroach on your precious time, and on your patience.

Mr. Ross. It is the delight of a minister of Christ, Madam, to be occupied in his Master's service, when

his labours are valued. It cheers his heart, and strengthens his hands.

Mrs. Aber. You are kind in thus encouraging us to trouble you, my dear sir. I trust we are all in earnest, though my dear Anna is, I fear, in error on many points. I feel thankful that Gertrude, and not she, was the first of my family who became religious. I fear, had Anna been the first, she would have disgusted us all by her, what appears to me, absurd peculiarities. For instance, my Anna makes it a matter of conscience to dress in the most ridiculous and particular manner, so that all her young friends regard her change on that point as a part of her new religion.

Anna. But pray, Mamma, tell Mr. Ross, how many hours I have lost in studying dress. Ought not such inclinations to be mortified? Besides, St. Paul says, that women professing godliness should not adorn themselves with costly array.

Mrs. Aber. I do not wish it to be costly, my love. All I ask is, that it should not be particular, and throw an air of ridicule over us all. But, Mr. Ross, I must lay more of my poor Anna's peculiarties before you. During the last six or eight weeks we have been in London, she has considered it her duty to teach every person to whom she had it in her power to speak.—Whoever was our visiter, Anna instantly attempted to introduce the subject of religion; and though the person she addressed might at the time be involved in the vortex of fashionable amusements, Anna would begin to condemn them all—dancing as folly and waste of time—concerts as the same—the theatre as utterly sinful—and going to admire Miss O'Neil, as delighting in

the sacrifice of a human soul, and consequently more inhuman than the Roman ladies were, who found pleasure in witnessing the earthly agonies of gladiators.—She reproved every one; and in short has made every one dislike her; and all this, while she herself must necessarily have a very small portion of religious knowledge. Can all this be right?

Mr. Ross. Can Miss Aberley quote St Paul's authority for all this, as she did respecting dress?

Anna. Not exactly for each particular Mamma has mentioned. Yet how should I have known that any of these things were sinful, unless Gertrude had taken pains to convince me that they were so?

Mr. Ross. Were you convinced they were sinful, merely by Miss Gertrude's saying so?

Anna. No, certainly, unless I had seen that Gertrude had really lost all pleasure in such things, and really delighted in religion—I should not have attended merely to her opinions. But when I saw the change that had taken place in her, my conscience told me that what had produced that change was a reality of love to God—a reality of wishing to please and serve Him, of which my heart was destitute—and I hope the consciences of others will speak to them the same language, when I speak truth to them. I am willing to be hated and scorned, provided I carry truth to any soul. You do not know, Sir, what I have suffered from the terrors of an awakened conscience; nor the anxiety I feel to lead others to leave that state of blindness in which I so lately was. Oh! what madness; what folly it now appears to me to spend hours, and days, and years, as I have done. Every thing respecting

God and eternity seems now so awfully real! Why should I value people's opinion of me, in comparison with the chance of leading them into truth?

Mr. Ross. And have you, Miss Aberley, been the happy means of leading any one to the knowledge of the truth?

Anna. Not that I know of; but I resisted conviction too long myself, to wonder at any one else doing so. But tell me, Sir, do *you* think I have been wrong? I beg you will speak truth—plain truth to me, however severe. Was I wrong in attempting to point out truth to others, whilst so ignorant myself?

Mr. Ross. (*Gently.*) I feel afraid, My dear Miss Aberley, to condemn what was done under the impressions you describe, and with so much indifference respecting the consequences to yourself. Yet the very kindest and best services may be performed in such a way as to defeat the very intentions with which they are done. We must ever remember, in attempting to lead people to think as we do, that we are human beings endeavouring to influence human beings, and must use those arguments which we know by experience are attractive to the human heart. A real change must come from God; but he uses means suited to the end. A plain declaration of truth is one means, and conscience will be on the side of that truth; yet if it is declared in a manner revolting to the heart, conscience is then to struggle against the disgust of the heart, and will not easily be heard. On the contrary, if the heart is won along with the conscience, all is won. St. Paul exhorts us to attend to what is lovely and of good report in all we do, and he himself is beau-

tifully tender and gentle in his treatment of the ignorant. Now, my dear Miss Aberley, it is not *felt* to be lovely, neither is it of good report, for very young persons to presume to teach, particularly when they themselves have scarcely escaped from those errors against which they warn others.

ANNA. But if we receive light, are we entitled to put it under a bushel?

Mr. Ross. (*Smiling.*) No, we are to let it "so shine, that men *seeing our good works*, may glorify our Father who is in heaven."

ANNA. But is it not a good work to warn others from your own experience that they are ruining themselves?

Mr. Ross. You cannot, my dear Miss Aberley, by mere words, convince any one that your experience is light from heaven.

ANNA. But if I am utterly changed, they wilfully shut their eyes if they do not see that the change is of God.

Mr. Ross. That must depend entirely on the nature of the conduct exhibited. I would not discourage you, Miss Aberley, but when God opens your eyes to perceive what that really is which you now term an utter change, and when you come to look back on the present state of your heart and conduct, you will be less surprised at the slowness of others, and will wonder that you should have regarded yourself as "utterly changed," and that by the Holy Spirit. Forgive my plainness—what I say of you, I would say of any one who had come so very lately from a state of ignorance, into the knowledge of the first principles of truth.

ANNA. I love what you say. The severity of truth has become strangely agreeable to me. But then must I be silent? Must I never show to others that way of salvation which I myself have found?

Mr. Ross. I do not say so: but it is not easy to lay down any rule on this point. What I would advise is this. As it is impossible that you should be otherwise than ignorant, study the scriptures; might I say study them on your knees—at least with a praying heart over every passage. Realize continually the presence of God in Christ. You know he is the only way to the Father. Search the scriptures for those passages which reveal to you the character of your Lord, and in what relation he stands to you. Pray earnestly for his Spirit to enlighten your mind, and to reveal the character and work of Christ to your soul—rest not till you know what it is to "abide in Him"—till you can say He is your peace, and your righteousness, and your joy. This is the first lesson a young Christian has to learn. Live near this Lord—without him you can do nothing. Follow on to know Him more and more—make yourself acquainted with his word, praying for his grace to enable you to walk according to it; and, instead of aiming at distinguishing yourself by some great effort, undertake nothing without bringing the matter to him in prayer, imploring his guidance and his Spirit to show you how unable you are of yourself to do any thing aright. Walking thus, you will not readily offend by speaking rashly or harshly to any one; and if you should offend by speaking truth in the spirit of love and meekness, you are then only in the path of duty.

ANNA. (*Sighing.*) I know little of such walking.—You have made me feel how poor, and blind, and miserable I am.

Mr. Ross. Do you recollect how our gracious Lord and Master concludes his address to those whom he accused of being poor and blind, and miserable, while they thought themselves rich?

ANNA. I do.

Mr. Ross. How much comfort then, may they receive from his words, who feel that they are so? "As many as I *love*, I rebuke and chasten. Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

(*Anna's eyes fill with tears, and she turns away.*)

EDW. In what a variety of characters our Lord is represented in Scripture?

GER. Yes: and how necessary we find these different characters to be to us in our different states of feeling.

Mr. Ross. And we shall continue to find them so to the last. There is no situation, no state of mind, no state of feeling, in which we can be, that we do not find him represented in Scripture as bearing the very character suited, in those circumstances, to be our most sympathizing, most powerful and tender friend. Oh! He is indeed the friend of us sinners, from the moment that first, in ignorance, and darkness, and fear, we apply to him, until that hour when he enables us without dismay, sometimes with joy and rapture, to meet death and eternity.

ANNA. Enter eternity! What an awful thought.

Mrs. ABER. Awful indeed!

Mr. Ross. (*Feelingly.*) Not if our love is fixed on Him from whom we must be absent till we enter eternity.

ANNA. But if we should be mistaken—if we should suppose we know him, when we do not? Oh! I sometimes long that the veil was withdrawn—that my uncertainty was at an end—yet I tremble at the thought.

Mr. Ross. Did you, Miss Aberley, tremble at the thought of death and eternity before that change took place in your mind of which you have been speaking?

ANNA. No. I thought the idea of death gloomy and chilling, but had no doubt that, had I died, I should have become an angel in heaven—and such are the opinions respecting themselves of all my former companions, and on no better grounds than I had.

Mr. Ross. But now that God has opened your eyes to see that you are unfit by nature to enter heaven, and led you to that refuge he has appointed for sinners, may you not confidently trust that he will not leave his work unfinished?

EDW. I see a carriage driving towards the house.—It must be Charles: I shall go and meet him, and bring him here. [*Exit.*

Mrs. ABER. Let us all go and welcome him. You will allow me, Mr. Ross to introduce my nephew to you. I think you will be pleased with him.

Mr. Ross. I shall be happy to be introduced to Mr. Ashton, but must delay that pleasure till to-morrow.

ANNA. My brother promised us the pleasure of your company to close the evening.

Mr. Ross. I must beg you to excuse me—my own

little flock will be assembled. This hour I consider theirs. We do not prosper in heavenly things when I encroach upon it.

Mrs. Aber. We certainly must not interfere with your own family, Mr. Ross. I hope we shall see you early to-morrow.

Mr. Ross. I hope to have that pleasure; but must now say good night; and may that heavenly Guardian who "slumbers not" be with us all till we meet again. Miss Gertrude, may I ask you to convey a message to your brother from me. (*He speaks to her in a low voice, then enters the wood.*)

Mrs. Aber. A secret, Gertrude?

Ger. (*Smiling.*) It is for my brother's ears only.

Anna. What a heavenly-minded man; Oh how I long for the Sabbath, that I may hear him speak of heavenly things.

Mrs. Aber. He is indeed very pleasing, and has something holy in his manners. But now let us join your brother and Charles.

Enter Edward.

Ger. Where is Charles? What is the matter? You look discomposed. Has any thing happened? (*Anxiously.*)

Edw. No. But who do you think has arrived with Charles?

Mrs. Aber. Who?

Edw. Mr. Lornton.

Mrs. Aber. Ger. and Anna. Mr. Lornton!

Edw. Yes, himself.

Anna. How vexatious! What on earth has brought him?

Edw. I cannot tell, but Charles and he met at the last stage, and as horses were not to be had for both carriages, they came together.

Mrs. Aber. Well, I certainly wish he had not come at present – but now my dear children, remember you have to prove the sincerity and power of your religion. You know Mr. Lorraton has always, at least, *intended* to be kind to you all; and I entreat you, do what you can to make his stay here agreeable to him. Some idea of duty to you has led him to take this long and fatiguing journey. You, Gertrude, I can depend upon. You have always loved your guardian.

Ger. I really do love him, and think he has a great deal of feeling behind his cold, stiff manners.

Edw. You love him, Gertrude, because you have never displeased him, and do not know the severity and contempt with which he finds fault.

Ger. I have displeased him of late, Edward, and he has in private, said many severe things to me; yet he listened patiently to all I said in my defence, and seemed more vexed and angry, and anxious to understand and enter into my reasons for doing what appeared to him willed and absurd.

Anna. He has always had a favour for you: but Oh! those private conferences. How often I have wished he would give his lectures in public. How tremendous he looks when he says, "Miss Anna, I desire a few minutes conversation with you."

Edw. I cannot say I love him, but I do respect him. But now we must really go to him.

Ger. I have a message from Mr. Ross to you, Edward.

EDW. What?

GER. He hopes you will continue to act as the Christian head of your house, though its inmates have increased in number.

Edw. And Mr. Lornton there! (*Embarrassed.*) My friend did not know *he* was come.

GER. He said, that drawing back after you had once begun, would have a bad effect on your servants and people—besides, (*in a whisper*) will you seem ashamed of your Master?

EDW. (*With warmth.*) No, were the whole world here.

Forenoon.

An apartment in Arnavoir Castle, the windows of which open on the lawn.

Mr. LORNTON, GERTRUDE.

(A great many people are seen from the windows. Mr. Ross and Edward appear to be addressing them. Mr. Lornton paces up and down the room, Gertrude watching his looks, and at times stealing a glance towards the window.)

Mr. LORN. I cannot believe child, that it is really agreeable to you to remain here with me, when so much preaching over coarse Bibles, and two-penny tracts, is going on yonder.

GER. Were you with us, Sir, I should prefer being on the lawn.

Mr. LORN. I with you! Can you suppose I would countenance such preposterous folly? I used to think that with all his faults, your brother had a good share of common sense, but I begin to doubt this. Can he really be such a fool as to believe that sagacious, reflecting Scotchmen, will be duped by him and his par-

son, into the notion that canting speeches are as much worth having as good cheer; or that the sanctimonious looks of a young landlord promise as well for their future interests, as if he showed himself the open-hearted, open-handed gentleman.

GER. I hope, Sir, the people will love my brother, such as he is. Will you pardon me for saying, Sir, that you yourself did not seem displeased with him last night, when he assembled his servants, and read and prayed with them. You did not, indeed, remain with us, but afterwards you treated Edward so kindly, and took leave of him for the night so like a father, that he was quite moved.

(Mr. Lornton makes no answer, but turning his face away, again paces through the room for a time, then stops and fixes his eyes earnestly on a portrait which hangs at one end of the apartment—again walks a few steps, then stops, and looks mildly at Gertrude.)

Mr. LORN. You know that picture, Gertrude?

GER. Yes; it is my father's. I have spent much of this morning in contemplating it. I think I never saw a more noble, or engaging countenance, than it represents.

Mr. LORN. There never was a more noble, or more engaging human being, than he was, of whom that picture is a most perfect resemblance.

GER. Edward tells me that the people here have the most enthusiastic love for his memory.

Mr. LORN. All who had an opportunity of really knowing him, loved him with a kind of love, which I at least have never met with any other who could inspire.

(Turns away and again paces the room. Gertrude, rising, and putting her arm within Mr. Lornton's, walks with him.)

Mr. LORN. Have you any recollection of your father, my dear?

GER. I have a very strong recollection of him. I, at this moment, have him before me, as I saw him on the morning he, for the last time, left home to join the army. I recollect being waked, and seeing Papa looking earnestly, and mournfully at me, when he bent over my little crib. I sprung up, to clasp my arms round his neck, and he held me for a time pressed to his bosom—he then put me a little from him—looked at me—pressed me again to his breast, and kissed me many, many times, then laid me gently down, and, raising his eyes to heaven, and clasping his hands together, said, "God protect my children."

Mr. LORN. (*Sighing deeply.*) Poor Aberley!

GER. God, my dear Sir, has heard his prayer. First he has given us a kind and careful earthly guardian, and now I trust he is leading us to himself, our heavenly Father.

Mr. LORN. I could have felt for you all as my own children, had your brother and sister regarded me at all as a parent. I do not, however, blame them. I know that circumstances have rendered my temper very unsuitable to those that are full of youth and hope. For you, my dear, I do feel as a father.

GER. I feel certain, my dear Mr. Lornton, that Edward and Anna will please you more in future than they have hitherto done.

Mr. LORN. Your brother resembles his father strikingly in person and in features, but his impetuous, ungovernable temper, is the opposite of what his father's was; and there is so much of it in the expressions of his countenance that till last night he has seldom recalled my friend to my memory. Last night,

when he declared his intention of serving God in his family, whoever might be in his house, your father was before me. The firm, manly, ingenuous, yet embarrassed expression of his countenance, was exactly his father's, as I have often seen him, when his pure and correct feelings would not suffer him to join in some parts of the conduct of his friends; and when he, while hating to differ from them, yet in his noble manner gave his reasons, and either dissuaded his friends from their intentions, or left them.

GER. (*Laying her hand on Mr. Lornton's arm, and looking earnestly at him.*) And can you, Sir, think those principles cant and folly which lead Edward thus to resemble my father? Must there not have been the same elevation and integrity of mind to produce the same expression of countenance?

Mr. LORN. Perhaps, my dear, but proceeding from very different sources.

GER. Every good and perfect gift comes from God, the only source of good. I hope, my dear father—— (*hesitates and stops.*)

Mr. LORN. Your father's conduct, when I knew him, proceeded from no other source than his own excellent and upright nature. Yet, Gertrude, I understand your hesitation, and that mournful expression of your countenance; and perhaps I may be able to relieve you from your fears that your father's religious sentiments were no better than your guardian's. I find, on again reading over some of his last letters to me, expressions which may perhaps lead you to hope that his opinions resembled your own. When I myself first read these expressions, they only confirmed to me

the mournful truth, that the weakness of body which precedes death may affect and overpower the greatest minds; but I confess, Gertrude, the strange religious mania which has seized you, and with which you have infected all your family, has given a new character to he se expressions. Before I left London to be present here to-day, as I considered it my duty to be, I looked over all your father's letters to me. In many of them he had mentioned to me his wishes respecting his children, and also respecting the management of his estates and tenantry; and I was determined that nothing in my power should be left to fulfil those wishes. I have several of his last letters with me. Here are two, out of which I shall read you some passages. You know your father fell in Egypt. The first of these letters was written the day after he received the wound which proved fatal. He says, "I find that my wound might not be considered dangerous in a colder climate, but here my recovery is very uncertain. I have told you my wishes respecting Anna and my children; and now, Lornton, perhaps we shall never again meet in this world, and what, my friend, do we know of another? I who find myself on the verge of it, feel a new, and I confess to you, an appalling anxiety on this point.—My dearest friend, do not leave this tremendous affair to be learnt at your last hours. There is enough besides to think too deeply of them. I entreat you to reflect on what I have written; and, Lornton, have my children educated religiously."

Ger. (*Her eyes filling with tears.*) O my dearest father! I trust he found light and peace.

Mr. Lorn. In his last letter, after some anxious di-

rections about your mother, he says, "And now, my dearest friend, farewell, I write with great difficulty. Remember what I said in my last. Seek to know God. You do not yet know him, Lornton. Seek to know the way of salvation by Christ. I have been taught that way; there is no other. God has been very merciful to me. A soldier has been my earthly teacher." Here the letter stopt.

GER. (*Bursts into tears, and turns away. After a pause.*) Will you, dear Sir, allow me again to read these last words. And this is my own dear papa's writing! How his hand has trembled! Oh sweet, precious words! (*Kisses the letter, then reads.*) "I have been taught that way; there is no other." "God has been very merciful to me." O how gracious is our God! My father! my mother! all of us brought to the knowledge of Himself! My dear Sir, (*Turning earnestly to Mr. Lorn on,*) you shall not be separated from us.—Why have you neglected my father's last entreaties? You will never again meet him unless you too know that God has been merciful to you; unless you find that only way of salvation which my father found.

Mr. LORN. (*Sternly.*) What can we know of the mercy of God?

GER. (*Shrinking back, and with surprise.*) How!

Mr. LORN. (*Bitterly.*) Twice in my life I have cast myself on what I had been taught was the mercy of God, and both times I might equally have prayed to the winds. Do not suppose, child, that all those whom you see disregarding the forms of religion, do so from utter indifference to the subject. Most men have had

their time of religion—their religious history—some dark enough.

GER. (*Gently, but firmly.*) You have, my dear Sir, misunderstood the providence of God respecting yourself.

Mr. LORN. Twice, Gertrude, my whole happiness has been wrapt up in the lives of two dear objects.—The first became ill. I prayed with my whole soul to that Being who believed was merciful, and the only disposer of life and death. I prayed that the idol of my affections might be spared to me, and my prayer was disregarded. I then had just begun to know your father, and my disappointed affections soon centered in him. He was ordered abroad. I knew his brave and gallant spirit, and foresaw that he would be wherever danger was. Again I prayed and appealed to the compassion of the Most High. I heard that my most beloved friend was wounded. Still I hoped in the *mercy* of heaven; but heard of his death. Why should I pray, or believe there is that attribute in the Divine character which we call mercy? Our little distant griefs cannot interfere with the course of things in the immense arrangements of the Deity?

GER. (*Mildly but warmly.*) And did you, my dear Sir, come into the presence of God, and say, "O God, thou hast taught us that thou only art worthy of the first place in our hearts. Thou hast condescended to say to each of us 'Give *me* thine heart.' Thou hast even declared thyself a jealous God, who will suffer no rivals—no idols; yet here I have one precious, beloved, only possessor of my heart. Thou alone art the disposer of life and death. I pray thee ruin my soul, by

preserving to me this rival who has usurped thy place in my affections, and separated my heart from thee its only good?" And when God in love refused this prayer, and took away that which came between himself and your soul, instead of returning to Him who in mercy smote that he might heal you, did you instantly set up another idol to worship with your affections instead of Him, and again insult him by prayers to preserve to you his rival; and are you displeased because in love he again refused you, and left your heart empty and desolate, that he himself might fill it? Are you not, my dear Sir, saying there is no mercy where all is mercy?

Mr. Lorn. (*Gently.*) You are a strange arguer, my child. According to you, God loves you not in giving you so many objects of affection, and would show his kindness more by taking your mother, and brother, and sister, from you.

Ger. If I loved them more than him; but I hope he has the first place in my affections; and my constant prayer to him is, to suffer no rivals in my heart.

Mr. Lorn. Well, my dear, may you always suppose your prayers are answered!

Ger. Suppose! O my dear Sir, how dishonouring to the omnipotent, omniscient God, is your cold unloving assent to his general and superintending Providence; while you, not from disbelieving in revelation but from his rejection of a prayer which it would have injured you to grant, spurn from you the revealed and most delightful truth, that so minute is the care of God over all of us, that even a hair of our heads cannot change colour without him! (*A shout of joy is heard*

from the lawn.) Do let us go, dear Sir, and discover what has occasioned so much joy.

Mr. Lorn. Well, my dear, I shall accompany you. I suppose these sounds of joy have been at last occasioned by some substantial proofs of kindness from your brother.

Ger. Before we go, Sir, let me ask, does Mamma know of these letters from Papa which you have just shown to me?

Mr. Lorn. No, my dear; I showed them to your aunt Stanly, who was with your mother when she heard of your father's death: but your aunt dreaded that they would add to your mother's almost insupportable grief, the sad idea that your father had been uncomfortable in the view of death.

Ger. But my father would himself write to Mamma in the same strain.

Mr. Lorn. By some unfortunate accident, your mother never received your father's last letters. The soldier who attended your father during his last illness, and whom he intrusted with some things to bring to your mother, mentioned that these letters had been sent by a conveyance considered particularly safe, but they never reached her.

Ger. What has become of the soldier who attended my father?

Mr. Lorn. I believe he now resides somewhere in the Highlands of Scotland.

Ger. Did Mamma see him?

Mr. Lorn. No, my dear; your aunt Stanly did, but thought his religious canting about your father's death

would be too much for your mother. She never knew there was such a person.

GER. He would be the soldier Papa mentions as his teacher. I wish I could see him. Did not aunt Stanly err in preventing Mamma from seeing him?

Mr. LORN. I think she did; but at that time I was unfit to think of what would be best for others. Mrs. Stanly did as she pleased.

GER. Now let us go, dear Sir.

The Lawn.

[Mrs. Aberley, Mr. Ross, Anna, Edward, and Mr. Ashton. Mr. Lornton, and Gertrude, who leans on his arm, stands a little apart. Mr. Ashton moves a few steps to join them, but Gertrude motions him not to approach. People stand round.]

Mr. LORN. Edward seems about to make a speech.

EDW. (*Going forward towards the people.*) My friends I have told you my intention of residing among you part of every year. (*Renewed acclamations of joy.*) Now I have to assure you, that I will act exactly as my father did respecting your little farms. I will remove none of you without finding other means of support for you. (*Shouts of joy—Voices exclaim, "God bless you, Sir; God will reward you, Sir—Noble son of our noble Colonel."*) I must, however, my friends, make one reservation in giving you this promise. shall suffer no immorality on my estate that it is in my power to prevent; and should I hear of any fraud against government, or any attempt to injure the morals of the people, the man whom I find engaged in such practices shall be removed, should his fathers have been on the estate for centuries. Good conduct shall make long leases—bad conduct instant removals. You all

now possess the Scriptures. Study them, and teach their holy precepts to your households. There you will find the way not only to be saved, but to be pure and holy in your lives. I have taken them for the rule of my own life; and as we shall all be judged according to them when we meet together at the bar of God, let us seriously now begin to act in all things as they direct.

(Some of the people hang their heads, and look grave; others, and most of the women exclaim, "Oh, that it may be so! God bless his sweet holy young heart! He's like his father. He's our guide to live," &c.)

Mr. Lorn. (*Looking earnestly at Edward.*) Dear fellow! at this moment he is his father's image.

(Some bustle among the people—then the young people and children are brought out by a respectable looking elderly man from among the people, and approach towards Gertrude. Edward puts his arm within that of Mr. Ross, and they also approach.)

Edw. This is your school, Gertrude. Allow me, Sir, (*Presenting Mr. Ross to Mr. Lornton,*) to introduce my friend Mr. Ross, the Clergyman of this parish, to you.

(Mr. Lornton returns Mr. Ross's bow slightly and contemptously. The Schoolmaster arranges the children in an orderly semicircle before Gertrude. Mrs. Aberley, Anna, and Mr. Ashton draw near.)

Schoolm. (*Addressing Gertrude.*) Madam, the children desire in one voice to express their gratitude to their heavenly Father and their earthly benefactress, in a short hymn they have learnt to sing.

Mr. Lorn. (*Glancing superciliously at Mr. Ross.*) Got up finally for effect.

Mr. Ross. (*With quickness.*) For what effect, Sir, do you mean?

(Mr. Lornton turns contemptuously away, and gives no answer. Gertude changes from one arm of Mr. Lornton to the other, so as to be between him and Mr. Ross, then addressing the latter.)

GER. Will you say for me, Sir, that it will give us much pleasure to hear the children sing their hymn?

Mr. Ross. My dear young people, the ladies will have much pleasure in hearing your hymn.

The children sing.

Like erring lambs we wandered far,
From our Great Shepherd's fold of peace;
Our hearts, rebellious, felt at war,
With his strict laws and righteousness.

But though averse to Him, his love
Still sought to bring his wand'rers home;
At last his spirit from above
Taught a fond lamb to bid us come.

Oh! Glory then be to that Lord
Within whose fold we seek a place;
And may his love best joys afford
To her—his messenger of grace.

[Mr. Lorn on when the clear young voices of the children at once begin the hymn, is much affected but struggles to overcome and conceal his feelings. The ladies are moved to tears and, when the children cease singing, go forward to caress and, praise them; while the Schoolmaster singles out some children to read, &c. to Gertrude.]

Mr. LORN. (*Addressing Edward.*) You mean, I suppose, to continue this theatrical seminary?

EDW. Certainly my dear Sir; but what appears to you theatrical, is, I am certain, the expression of the real feelings of the heart.

Mr. LORN. (*With a sneer.*) An extempore poetic effusion!

Mr. Ross. The hymn, such as it is, was written by the Schoolmaster. There surely is heart, if not poetry in it; and the young people feel it so.

Mr. LORN. Young hearts are easily won, and when

won, easily ruled, and turned to any purpose. I detest all this artful machinery to ensnare young hearts.

Mr. Ross. I hope they will be indeed ensnared into the love and service of their God.

Mr. Lorn. (*Sneeringly.*) And secure the comfortable dominion of his meek and lowly minister.

Mr. Ross. (*Mildly, but with emotion.*) His ministers ought to have one safeguard from insult—the knowledge that they must submit to taunts and contempt, while they are precluded from every means of repulsing them.

Mr. Lorn. (*Looking full at Mr. Ross, who looks at him mildly, but with dignity.*) Sir, I beg your pardon, I have been unprovokedly brutal.

Mr. Ross. (*Gently.*) I can feel every excuse for prejudices against churchmen. Some of us have given too good cause for them. Yet (*smiling*) the church to which I belong has wisely left no temptation to lure those characters into the ministry, who, in a wider field, might become the most odious of all human beings—earthly minded, ambitious, hypocritical, domineering priests.

Mr. Lorn. Is it in my power to do any thing for the benefit of your school? To the poor amongst your parishoners I must beg you to distribute a trifle.

Mr. Ross. When you are convinced, Sir, that our schools are really useful to the people, there is much that still may be done to improve them. As for our poor, I must entreat you not to regard them as paupers. They have still that most Christian spirit which shrinks from receiving alms; and I would not for the world it was either wounded or weakened. We can in

the parish, and secretly, provide for those who are really unable to support themselves.

Mr. Lorn. Indeed! That seems a noble system.—(*Goes forward to clap the head of a fine little boy, who, with his bonnet in his hand, has just repeated a psalm to Gertrude.*) Well done, my fine little fellow. (*Addressing the schoolmaster,*) is your school as perfect as you could wish it?

Schoolm. We have been wonderfully provided in every thing, Sir. The young lady bestowed on us an excellent school-house and elementary books. Mr. Aberley has supplied abundance of Bibles, and means for teaching writing and arithmetic. I am ashamed to mention any more wants; yet when I taught a school in Edinburgh, there was another thing which was found useful both to the children and their parents.

Mr. Lorn. And pray what was that?

Schoolm. A library, Sir!

Mr. Lorn. A library! (*Shaking his head.*) Friend, those libraries make you discontented, plotting, Scotch politicians.

Schoolm. Oh Sir! think what you say. Can the reading of books which teach us to obey the laws of God (and only such would be allowed here,) lead us to break those laws; for are not contentment with our condition, and submission to our rulers, laws of God?

Mr. Lorn. (*Taking out his pocket-book, and presenting a bank note to the Schoolmaster.*) I dare say you will purchase no unsafe books, Mr. Schoolmaster. I therefore beg you will provide to the amount of that note for your library.

Schoolm. (*Hesitating.*) Sir, unless you feel quite

satisfied that the library is a good thing, I would not wish—

Mr. Lorn. (*Interrupting him impatiently.*) Pshaw! take the money and do what you like with it.

Schoolm. (*Shrinking back.*) No, indeed, Sir!

Mr. Lorn. Well, this is the strangest country, and the strangest people on the face of the earth. The country wild and barren, yet attracting the love of its children, beyond all other parts of the fair creation, where they are forced to wander in search of what its sterility denies them; its inhabitants proverbially poor, yet shrinking from the reception of money as a degradation.

Mr. Ross. (*Smiling.*) Yes, Sir; and that love of country, and nice sense of independence, are what we desire to cherish in our rising population.

Mr. Lorn. I thought the Christian religion professed to open and enlarge the heart, and to lead its votaries to universal philanthropy.

Mr. Ross. Certainly it does, and Scotchmen are not behind any country in proving this; yet the remembrance of home, and first and holy impressions received there, binds it around their hearts with a force, which every scene of wickedness, and cold-heartedness, and irreligion, which they witness when absent from it, tends to increase, and, wherever they wander, still it is the *home* of their hearts and of their souls.

(Here the people call out, "Allan Cameron, Allan Cameron!" and an old soldier approaches, while they open their ranks to make way for him.)

Ger. (*Aside to Mr. Lornton.*) Who is Allan Cameron?

[Allan Cameron, holding an old Bible in his hand, approaches towards Edward.]

ALLAN. Ye need not tell me which is the young laird. I should have known him amongst a thousand. (*Looks intently at Edward, then turns away to wipe the tears from his eyes.*)

[Gertrude whispers to Edward, who starts, then goes nearer Allan.]

EDW. You are the soldier who attended my father in his last moments?

ALLAN. Yes, Sir. May God, your father's God, bless you, Sir. You are his very image. I thank God that he has permitted me to see this day. (*Mrs. Aberley approaches, looking very pale and faint.*)

GER. Dear Mamma, let us return to the house.—Allan shall go with us.

Mrs. ABER. No, no, my love. I am quite able to remain.

ALLAN. (*Looking mournfully at Mrs. Aberley.*) His last prayer was for you, Madam. (*Turns to the people, and motions to them to retire, which they immediately do to a short distance.*) I have lived to see the day that God has answered that prayer. O! he is indeed the hearer of prayer.

Mrs. ABER. (*Faintly.*) How do you mean that his last prayer has been answered, my friend?

ALLAN. His last prayer, Madam, was, that God in Christ would reveal himself to you, so as to make up a thousand fold for all earthly losses. He often prayed that you might be supported and comforted; but, towards the last, your everlasting interests lay heavy on his soul. Before he departed, he was enabled confidently to leave you on the mercy and tenderness of

his reconciled Father. And have I not this day seen and heard things which prove that his prayer has been heard?

Mrs. Aber. (*Much moved.*) I cannot remain. Let Allan come to me afterwards. No one follow me. I wish to be alone. [*Exit.*

Allan. (*Looks sorrowfully after Mrs. Aberley, then turns and addresses Edward.*) Sir, these old eyes have been blessed by seeing you this day distribute the word of life among your people. I have heard you declare that it had taught you the way of salvation, and peace, and happiness. The Bible I now offer to your acceptance, is the one from which my noble Colonel, your honour's father, learnt the knowledge of God, and the way of salvation. I think you will value it for that reason. I have kept it, praying and longing for the day in which I might with that hope offer it to you.

Edw. A precious gift indeed, Allan. (*Gertrude, Mr. Lornton, &c. gather round Edward, who opens the Bible.*) It is full of pencil marks. Were those made by my father?

Allan. They were, Sir.

Ger. How long did my father survive his wound?

Allan. Three weeks, Madam.

Ger. Did you attend him all that time?

Allan. I did, Madam, for which I never cease to thank God. Colonel Aberley's servant was at the time in the fever hospital, and I was, at his own desire, appointed his constant attendant. Every soldier in the regiment would have considered it an honour to be his attendant. Young as he was for his rank, he had

been more like a father than any thing else to the soldiers. We had all cause to love him, and just before the battle, he had given me particular cause for gratitude to him.

Mr. Lorn. How my friend?

Allan. Why, Sir, after having often served where death surrounded me on every side, I at last began to think of what might follow after death. This lead me to read my Bible. It had travelled many a mile with me, though it had seldom been opened. I had got it long before, when I was a lad, from my poor mother and somehow never had parted with it. I soon found there that I was on the broad road which leads to hell. I read on till I found that Saviour, the knowledge of whom brought peace to my conscience, and joy and purity into my soul. When I had found that Saviour, and felt the wonderful change that a knowledge of Him produces on the heart and life, I tried to persuade my comrades to seek the knowledge of him also. Some of them listened to me, and sought, and found him.—We had no chaplain or teacher but our precious Bibles. There, however, we found the promise of the Spirit to lead those who sought him into all truth; we found there also the promise, that "where two or three are gathered together in the name of Christ, he will be present with them, to bless and to do them good." We therefore met together to search the Scriptures, and to pray. We were called canting fellows; and it was prophesied that, in the day of danger, we should prove cowards. At last the Captain of my company put me under arrest, as the ringleader of prayer-meetings, which, he said, dispirited the men. I did not af-

terwards desist, however, as I thought my officer went beyond his power. He then reported my conduct to the Colonel, and I was sent for. I found that Captain Woodford had accused me of disobeying orders, and of a disposition to mislead and dispirit the men. The Colonel listened attentively to my defence, then asked me, in his own mild friendly manner, if I could suppose I was right in disobeying the orders of my officer? I replied, that we were obeying God, and that the hours we met for that purpose were allowed the other men, and to us, if we chose, for amusement.—Colonel Aberley looked at Captain Woodford when I said this, then turned to me, and said smiling, "But, Cameron, you damp the courage of your brother soldiers. You will disgrace us when the day of danger comes." "No, Colonel," said I, "God forbid. His servants are not those most likely on that day to fear being called into his presence." "I should think not, indeed," said Colonel Aberley, quite gravely; then, added, "Captain Woodford, let us judge for ourselves in this matter, and not condemn a soldier for an offence, of the nature of which I believe we are both, perhaps, too ignorant. Cameron, will you and your friends meet this evening?" I replied that we hoped to do so. "Well, then," said he, "we shall come and hear you. I am sure you will not alter the style of your prayers." I assured him we should not. It was a fine moonlight night, far brighter than moonlight ever is in our country. We were encamped on a wide plain. A few trees were near my tent, under which my comrades and I met. We held a lantern while we

read, then put out the light, and stood uncovered under the bright heavens while one or other of us prayed. I had just begun when we heard footsteps approaching. It was our brave Colonel and Captain Woodford. They stood near us. My whole soul rose in prayer for Colonel Aberley; that he might be brought to the knowledge and the faith of Christ; yet I could not pray so as to lead him to suppose I thought of him; but I prayed for those most beloved by us; and though wife and children were near to my heart, that night he was nearest of all. In a little while I observed that he took off his hat, and stood also uncovered. Captain Woodford seemed impatient, but Colonel Aberley remained without moving, his eyes fixed on the ground, and his head uncovered, till I had finished. He then said, "My friends, you shall not be prevented from meeting to pray as often as you choose." He then put his arm within the Captain's, and said aloud, "Woodford, you have mistaken this matter; such prayers must lead a man to welcome death without fear." And after walking from us a few steps, he stopped, and, looking up, we heard him say, "How fair and pure all seems above us there, Woodford—unlike the scene that we may spread beneath it by to-morrow night." We heard no more, but on the second day after was the battle, and after it, poor Captain Woodford was found near where we stood, and beneath as bright a moon, a pale and bloody corpse.—I was near Colonel Aberley when he received his wound. Two horses had been shot under him during the day. Some officers received him in their arms as he fell. I saw no more till after the battle was over.

I was then sent for to him. A ball had been extracted from his side, and from that and other wounds he had lost so much blood that he looked very faint and pale, but his countenance had the same sweet and noble expression as ever. I was commanded to keep all quiet around him. This was not easy, so many came to inquire for him. When at last we were alone, and all the camp at rest but the poor sufferers, he said to me, "Cameron, I may die of this wound. I have thought too little of death. Have you your Bible here? I have no Bible." I brought my Bible, but entreated him to try to rest, as the doctor had desired.—He did so, and commanded me to do the same. I wrapped my cloak around me, and lay down by his bed.—Early in the morning he took my Bible, and began to read. I got up, but he commanded me to rest till he called me. He did not again speak for more than an hour, then said, "Cameron, come and tell me how you have read this Bible, so as to acquire that son-like feeling of confidence with which I heard you address God the other night. I feel none of it. The more I think of appearing before Him, the more I shrink from the reality as tremendously awful." He then listened to my endeavours to point out the way of return and access to God, with as much attention and humility as if I had been worthy to teach him. God gave me words, and my love for him gave me earnestness, and my heart prayed for a blessing as I spoke. It was wonderful how soon he embraced the Scripture offer of a Saviour. I was enabled to point out passages in the Bible which seemed to meet the very longings of his soul. He never thought he would recover. How-

ever, he did every thing that was prescribed. His time was spent in preparing for another world, and to his friends who visited him he spoke very openly. Many an officer left him with looks of thoughtfulness, seldom seen on their countenances; but Colonel Aberley had such a noble frank manner, that every thing he said was attended to. The last two days he spent almost entirely in prayer. He said to me, "I know now, Cameron, that son-like confidence in God, which so much struck me in your prayers." He then condescended to give me his hand, and said, "We are all sons of God, my friend, through faith in Christ Jesus—that Lord whom I have known so late, yet who has manifested Himself to me so as to overcome all the cavils of an ignorant and unbelieving heart. Once I would not have credited what I now feel. Oh! how lovely, how gentle are those characters in which our Lord and Master represents himself as coming to call us to another world—"The Son of Man—the Bridegroom!" How cold, how useless in the time of need—what an empty nothing is that, which, in the vanity of our reasoning, we call natural religion. How altogether suitable! How altogether adorable the religion of my Lord, my Saviour, my God and portion forever!" (*Edw. Ger. and Anna are much moved. Mr. Lornton takes the Bible and leans over it.*)

Edw. (*Addressing Mr. Ross.*) How wonderful is all this! How near it brings us to an unseen world—to God, the hearer and answerer of prayer! How real is his presence every where! How similar the overpowering, the subduing effect of His adorable grace in every soul! My beloved Father—it seems as if he was

at this moment present with us. Oh! may God enable me to act as if he were.

Mr. Ross. (*Earnestly.*) He will, he will. He leaves no work that he begins, unfinished.

Edw. (*Goes forward toward the people, who gather round him.*) My dear friends, in speaking to you to-day, I have felt conscious that in declaring my own determination to devote my life to the service of God, you could not feel much confidence in my resolutions, young, and untried, and full of faults as you know me to be. (*Cries of "We only know your goodness and kindness."*) Hear me without interruption, my friends. I have now an example to offer you, that you will think worthy of following. You loved my father. (*People, "Aye as our own souls."*) Look at this Bible. Your master, when he came to die, felt that he needed from this to learn how. See, it is all marked with his own dying hand. (*The people gather close to look, and exclaim mournfully, "His own hand!"*) Yes, his own hand. I shall read you some of the passages—here is one. "There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved, but the name of Jesus." I have told you that in this name is my only hope; but here is my father's own dying hand subscribing to the same single trust.—You know the strict propriety of his life. If any man could have approached God in his own righteousness, he might. (*People, "Aye, at an earthly bar none could have laid a fault to his charge."*) Yes, my friends, but when about to appear at an heavenly bar, even *he* found that he needed One to stand between him and the judgment he deserved there; and which of us then

need hope? (*People*, "*None, none.*") Then I trust you will all flee for refuge to that Saviour to whom he trusted the salvation of his soul. I will read another marked passage from the Bible. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And this, "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." These are some of the passages of this word of life, on which my father rested his hopes for eternity. My friends, shall we not follow his steps? This is my own Decision, in the strength of God my Saviour. It is the Decision, in the same strength, of all my family. (*The people are much moved.*) Mr. Ross, you are our guide and teacher—you will, I am sure also, be our faithful reprover. Now, my dear Sir, before we separate, you will entreat God for us, that he may enable us to obey His most gracious command, to believe in his Son for the salvation of our souls; and to awaken all of us to the vast importance of that which Christ himself calls "the one thing needful." Pray, my dear Sir, that none of us may venture again "to give sleep to our eyes till we have found a place for the Lord in our hearts."

(*Mr. Ross and Edward, &c. take off their hats, while Mr. Ross prays.*)

Here I shall stop. May the Decision of my reader be the same as that of the family, from whose history I have selected a few scenes. *They* continue to adhere strictly to their choice; and though they no longer participate in many of those pleasures in which they formerly placed their chief happiness; and though

some of those whom they loved have withdrawn themselves from their society, and joined in the ridicule their change of sentiments and conduct has excited: yet they date their knowledge of true happiness from the time they were brought to the knowledge of God—as truly, as clearly, as a man born blind would date seeing the light, and the beauty of creation, from the moment he received his sight. They, to have found, that there is more real kindness, real love, sincerity, and truth in religious society, than is to be found in the world; and that, though there may, to a cursory observer, be less external charm where the heart is the chief subject of culture, yet that amongst such are to be found the truest and best friend, and kindest and most conscientious relation—in short, all that is most valuable in human character, and what really secures the confidence and love of the heart. They have had the delight too, of seeing some of those they love and esteem begin to reflect on the subject of religion.—Amongst these is Mr. Lornton, who is now a regular attendant at Mr. Percy's church; and who has been observed to shed tears, when that clergyman spoke of the glory of *His* character, who condescends to *ask* the heart—the love of fallen man.

There can be no half-measures in religion. We are not religious—we know not what it is—we deceive ourselves if we suppose we do, unless it is the subject that occupies our most serious and most anxious thoughts; unless all other subjects seem trifles compared to it; unless we see that we would gain nothing if we gained the whole world and lost our own souls. We do not love God, and have no authority from

Scripture for supposing we do, unless he has a place in our souls and affections different from, and superior to, and altogether unlike the place any human being holds there. We do not know Christ, unless He has so manifested himself to our souls, as to make us feel that He is supreme in all that attracts the love and adoration of the heart and soul: "Whom," as the Apostle says, "having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

THE END.

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